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David Wilkie

THE

LIFE

OF

SIR DAVID WILKIE;

WITH

HIS JOURNALS, TOURS, AND CRITICAL REMARKS

ON

WORKS OF ART;

AND

A SELECTION FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

B 1534

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

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a.c

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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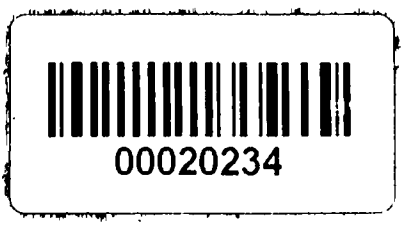

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR ROBERT PEEL, BART.

&c. &c. &c.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS LONG AND STEADY FRIENDSHIP

FOR

SIR DAVID WILKIE.

PREFACE.

I SHOULD feel some misgivings in setting this work before the world, if it depended solely on its merits as a literary composition. The Journals and Letters of Wilkie, while they exhibit a proper consciousness of his own acknowledged genius, betray no symptoms that they were ever intended for the public eye; and his biographer did not live long enough to watch his own work through the press, and see it in the new shape and light which the printer puts it in, of one consistent whole. Wilkie died suddenly at sea, full of hope and grand ideas in his art; and his biographer lay senseless within a few hours after he had written the last page of his friend's character — he died the next day. He understood Sir David, and loved him, and his heart was much with his subject.

But these volumes have, withal, many claims to public attention: they detail, with minute and faithful exactness, the several events of a great painter's life; his early struggles for distinction and support;

the progress of his pictures, from the first rude conception of incident and story, till that last stage in which they won universal approbation upon the walls of the Royal Academy. His Letters and Journals reveal his secret misgivings, his eager thirst for fame, the patience with which he laboured, and the warmth of his friendship; while his Memoranda and Remarks exhibit a series of practical observations upon art, such as no painter has left us since Sir Joshua Reynolds. His Memoranda were made in all the great galleries of Europe — the deliberate opinions of the reflecting artist: — the Remarks at home — the result of a whole life of acute observation and experience.

The Letters are addressed to his brother and sister, and the various persons of taste with whom his genius had brought him acquainted. The frank and ready communication of these letters lightened the biographer's task of collecting; and he was also grateful for the assistance he had received from the considerate contributions of friends and admirers. The names of the parties to whom the several letters are addressed exhibit the friendly quarters from whence they were received; but I feel that an enumeration of names is necessary, that I may express the thanks of a son for assistance rendered to a father.

I beg leave to acknowledge, with thankfulness, the

sense I feel of the courtesy and kindness of his Grace the Duke of Sutherland; the Right Honourable the Earl of Leven; the Countess of Mulgrave; the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart.; Viscount Mahon, M. P.; Mrs. Howley (the lady of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury); Honourable W. Leslie Melville; Sir George Beaumont, Bart.; Sir W. W. Knighton, Bart.; Sir James M'Grigor, Bart.; Samuel Rogers, Esq.; J. G. Lockhart, Esq.; Sir Martin Archer Shee, P. R. A.; Thomas Phillips, Esq. R. A.; William Collins, Esq. R. A.; Sir Peter Laurie; Peter Laurie, Esq.; J. Abel Smith, Esq. M. P.; Sir William Allan, R. A.; Lady Baird Preston; Miss Edgeworth; Mrs. Anthony Todd Thomson; Sir Claudius Hunter; Professor Buckland; John Burnet, Esq.; the late Abraham Raimbach, Esq.; George Young, Esq., of Denmark Hill; John Harvey, Esq.; Bonamy Dobree, Esq.; George Jones, Esq. R. A.; W. S. Woodburn, Esq.; Andrew Wilson, Esq., and his son, C. H. Wilson, Esq., of Edinburgh; Professor Gillespie, of St. Andrew's; Dr. Darling; James Hall, Esq.; Miss Catherine Sinclair; Angus Fletcher, Esq.; David Lister, Esq.; William Laidlaw, Esq.; Francis Graham Moon, Esq.; Mrs. Nasmyth, Edinburgh; A. Keightley, Esq.; W. S. Watson, Esq.; Alexander Fraser, Esq.; David Page, Esq., of Cupar; William Pagan, Esq., of Cupar; Andrew Geddes, Esq., A. R. A.; Thomas Bigge, Esq.; B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham;

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PETER CUNNINGHAM.

London, 1st March, 1843.

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LIFE

OF

SIR DAVID WILKIE.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF SIR DAVID WILKIE. — SENT TO SCHOOL AT PITLESSIE. — REMOVED TO KETTLE SCHOOL. — EARLY LOVE FOR DRAWING.

THE Scottish divines of the days of the Covenant regarded Painting and Poetry as matters idolatrous and vain: they dismissed from public worship all external splendour: their kirks were as rude as those of Rome were elegant: their dress was affectedly plain and homely: their manners rough and austere, and their sermons presuming and inquisitorial:—succeeding pastors softened these asperities, yet the sense of the beautiful, which education heightens, continued to be darkened by a devotion which, though sincere, was gloomy and unsocial: the scholars of the kirk made tardy and reluctant approaches towards the graceful and the polite; but nature at length asserted her own dignity—"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the sour came forth sweetness." Poetry and Painting, in their highest and happiest moods, sprung direct from the bosom of the kirk—the great poet of

the Seasons, and the great painter whose life I am about to delineate, were sons of Presbyterian clergymen.

Sir David Wilkie was born at the manse of the parish of Cults, on the banks of Eden-water, in the county of Fife, on the 18th of November, 1785. "I am the third son," he says, in a brief and modest memoir which he commenced of himself, "of the Rev. David Wilkie and of Isabella Lister, his wife, a native of the district. My father came from the county of Mid-Lothian, and from a neighbourhood often mentioned, which, endeared by birthright, had, like the ancient Hebron, a halo and an interest about it which no other place could possess. He was a native of Ratho-Byres, a small property which had been in possession of our family for 400 years, until, as he used to tell us, by the imprudence of his ancestors, it had passed to a younger branch of the same family and name, and was held by his father, John Wilkie, only as its tenant and cultivator. Of the singular worth and good qualities of that excellent person, my grandfather, I have heard much and from many persons. After his death, the family mansion, an humble structure, was allowed to sink to decay; but, from a feeling of respect to his own ancestry, the proprietor, James Wilkie of Gilchristown, permitted a gable-end, containing the chimney corner where my grandfather loved to entertain his friends, to remain, which I remember a grey ruin, a venerable landmark of other years."

It is still remembered as one of those dreams in which men of genius love sometimes to indulge, that

Sir David, as his fame increased, talked of buying back, if possible, the family inheritance, some fifty or sixty acres; of building a mansion where the grey old gable of Ratho-Byres stood; and of adorning it with pictures from his own pencil, recording deeds and scenes of Scottish glory. The birthplace of his fathers was dear to his heart; he loved to speak of Gogarburn, a small trout stream, as poets speak of the Tweed and the Tay; and of the scenes of skirmishes nigh Ratho, between the Scots, the English, and the Danes, as actions which History had done wrong to neglect, and which Painting, had such art then existed, would have done well to record. He used to relate, with pleasure, that Ratho possessed the old Scots parliamentary Bible of the Regent Morton, a folio, of a clear, and, for the times, a beautiful type, embellished with rude cuts, on which he had looked with interest; nor did he fail in these reminiscences to remember, that, in 1745, a female relation, whom a fear of Prince Charles and his Highlandmen had driven from Edinburgh to Ratho-Byres, prepared and presented to his grandfather the first cup of tea ever drank in the house of Wilkie, or indeed in the district.

"In the neighbourhood of Ratho," continues Sir David, "reside other families of my name: Matthew Wilkie of Bonnington, and William Wilkie of Ormiston Hill, extensive proprietors of land, are counted our relations, and claim descent from the same stock. With the Reverend John Wilkie of Uphall I wish I could count kindred as surely, for he had a mind superior to his time. It happened in the year 1720 that

a young man, of a good family, in the parish of Mid-Calder, fell sick, and, as the wisest of the land differed about the nature of his complaint, he was believed, in the superstitious spirit of those times, to be witched. A poor old woman of the neighbourhood acknowledged that she had uttered a rash wish respecting him, and, as his disorder corresponded with her words, she in consequence confessed herself a witch. The family complained to the Presbytery, and the Presbytery desired John Wilkie to preach a sermon on the heinousness of witchcraft. His text was, 'Submit yourselves therefore to God: resist the devil and he will fly from you:' the sermon, the fame of which still exists in the district, directed against superstitious beliefs and influences, removed the veil from many eyes; people wondered at their ignorance; and the old women of Mid-Calder were no longer believed, even on their word, to be witches. Of an equally enlightened and perhaps a finer spirit, was the Reverend William Wilkie, minister of Ratho, author of 'The Epigoniad,' a poem on the Theban War, which, in a language though reminding us too much of Pope, almost his contemporary, exhibits such facility of composition, such readiness of imagery, and such power of expression, as induced Hume the historian to call him the Scottish Homer. Nor should his Fables be forgotten by those who speak of his poetry; nor his love for the pursuits of agriculture, in which he excelled."

Here the memoir of Sir David abruptly closes, but the family papers enable me to continue the earlier narrative of the name. His father, a David also, who

was born at Ratho-Byres in the year 1738, exhibited in very early years a studious mood, which marked him for the church. He went to the University of Edinburgh in the eighteenth year of his age, and was preferred for his diligence to a bursary, which, in addition to its honours, brought him forty pounds Scots a year (*i. e.* 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* sterling). Such were the rewards with which an ancient nation stimulated the diligence of her scholars. For upwards of a dozen years he pursued his studies in Greek, Hebrew, Philosophy, and Mathematics, eking out the frugal allowance of his family by private instruction, which brought a few guineas to his pocket, and rising still in reputation for modest worth and solid and useful attainments. But though he appears to have taken all the steps which students take to make themselves known to the patrons of the church, the door of the pulpit seemed reluctant to open and admit him, and ere he had reached his thirtieth year he fell sick of that worst of all diseases—hope deferred. His merits, however, had made him known to William Wilkie, author of "The Epigoniad," promoted for his learning, if not for his poetry, to a professorship of divinity at St. Andrews; and the first use which that worthy man made of his power was to invite his desponding kinsman to attend his divinity class, and obtain for him a table bursary in that University. This was in the year 1768; in the succeeding year he passed his trials, and preached before the presbytery of St. Andrews; and in the year following he went as assistant to the minister of Glammis, at the humble salary of sixteen pounds, which received the welcome

augmentation of ten pounds, when he was next year appointed assistant to the pastor of Rescobie in Fifeshire.

These dates and circumstances are from a most simple and interesting account which this truly primitive person wrote of the leading events of his very useful life, in which he describes his studies and struggles for distinction and independence: he may now tell his story in his own words, for it is about to mingle with the fortunes of his distinguished son. "1773, November 24. Received a presentation from the United College of St. Andrews to the vacant church of Cults, which was sustained by them."—"1774, April 11. Left Rescobie, and on the 14th of April was ordained minister of Cults, where I still continue." This presentation has been attributed partly to the influence of Professor Wilkie, and partly to the favourable impression which his kinsman's learning and industry had made on the heads of the University. This family record now becomes more domestic and touching. "1776, October 18. Was this day married to one of the most beautiful women in Fife, Miss Mary Campbell, sister to George Campbell, one of the ministers of Cupar." This young lady was the aunt of the present Lord Campbell, and is still remembered as one of the loveliest women of the land. These sad words follow:—"1777, February 8. This day my beloved wife departed this life, having been taken ill of a fever, attended by consumption—an event the most afflicting I ever met with." Thus began, but did not end, the friendship between the families of Wilkie and Campbell.

A manse without a mistress I have heard grey heads call unseemly; that of Cults was in due season supplied with another. A sense of gratitude, perhaps, rather than of beauty such as that of Mary Campbell, induced the second choice: the marriage and its melancholy result are recorded in these words in the family papers:—"1778, November 3. Was this day married to Miss Peggie Wilkie, my cousin, in Edinburgh."—"1780, March 28. This day my most indulgent wife departed this life, after being delivered of a still-born male child." Thus was the manse of Cults deprived a second time of a young mistress. But the kirk establishment of Scotland is of itself a silent admonition against celibacy: in addition to a manse to manage, there is a glebe and garden, which, with their fruit and milk, require the skill of soft hands, warning the pastor that it is neither meet nor profitable to be alone. Something of this seems to have been present to the mind of the incumbent of Cults, and occasioned the following domestic entry in his family record:—"1781, October 4. Was this day married to Miss Isabella Lister, daughter to Mr. James Lister, farmer of Pitlessie Mill." The father of the bride was a man of singular worth and sagacity; respected too, for he was one of the elders of Cults, and miller of Pitlessie Mill, which stood then, and still stands, on Eden-water, near the village of Pitlessie, made memorable now by the pencil of his grandson. The bride herself shared in the sagacity of her race; and though so young that some of the more elderly maidens of Strath-Eden, taking serious looks for the work of years, declared

that the minister was old enough to be her father, she conducted herself with so much decorum, and fulfilled the duties of her station with such ease and courtesy, that all the parishioners rejoiced when, in due time, the minister was enabled to make the following entry in the domestic records of his house, which told that the hand of sorrow was lifted from the manse, where it had been twice laid most heavily. "1782. August 13. This day, at half an hour before twelve o'clock at noon, my dear wife was delivered of a son, who was baptized on the 25th, and received the name of John, after my father." Other entries of a like nature in the course of time followed. "1784. July 3. This day, about four o'clock in the morning, Bell was delivered of a son, who, on the eleventh, was baptized by the name of James, after her father." The third entry introduces us to the great artist. "1785, November 18. This day, about five in the evening, Bell was delivered of a SON, who, on December 4th, was baptized by the name of DAVID, after myself."

We might dispense with the paternal record after instancing this decisive entry, but it contains other particulars which are not less than interesting. On the day which preceded the birth of Sir David, his grandfather John Wilkie died, at Ratho-Byres, at the ripe age of ninety years : in the year 1793, the minister of Cults was cured of a complaint by Dr. Bell, which, brought on by study and anxiety, threatened his life; and, in the year 1794, he published his work on "The Theory of Interest," which good judges have pronounced a profound and able book, and which

Mr. Pitt, it is said, consulted in all his calculations: he writes thus of it himself—"Upon this work I have employed considerable study during the space of four years and a half, and which, it is to be hoped, will maintain its character while calculations are in repute in these kingdoms. It is dedicated to Lord Napier, who received the compliment in a kind and obliging manner." Of this good man, as well as of his family, more will be told in the course of the narrative.

In the days of which we speak, the stipends of the Scottish clergy were in general as low as any lover of humility could desire. That of Cults was only one hundred and thirteen pounds a year*; the glebe, or pendicle of land attached to the manse, extended only to three or four acres; and it required all the care and forethought of the minister and his very young wife to keep free from debt, and maintain the look of gentility which is expected in a scholar and a divine: this they accomplished by placing their income under a system of exact economy, and indulging in no expensive desires. But all this determination to be frugal might have failed, for as their family increased their necessary expenses increased also, had not Mrs. Wilkie, by a self-denial uncommon in so young a wife, and with the wisdom of an experienced matron, from the hour that she entered on the duties of her station, resolved to live within their income; and this resolution, which involved a serious frugality in silk, and lace, and "needle-work of Egypt," was fulfilled so strictly,

* The stipend, paid partly in kind and partly in money, amounted in the year 1774 to the moderate sum of 68*l.* 10*s.* 3*d.*; and for many years afterwards it fluctuated from 57*l.* up to 100*l.*

that till the outfit of their sons required those strict bonds of economy to be slackened, the minister of Cults continued free and unincumbered. In those days frugality and simplicity formed the domestic motto in the north, and this was true of the pastor as well as the peasant. It was not then a law in domestic economy that nothing should be of home or fireside manufacture; the spinning wheels of the manse, and the country looms of Pitlessie, provided fine linen and woollen cloth for all except holiday apparel: the simplicity of Presbyterianism demanded in the minister no sumptuous change of vestments; and the people—inclining to austerity—loved to listen to a sermon preached in a homespun coat.

In a simplicity corresponding to the pastor's dress the manse of those days was furnished. It is still remembered in Nithsdale, that on the ordination of a favourite minister, when one of his elders, aware of the humility of his purse, enquired how he would find furniture to replenish the manse, he replied: "The fir and the alder of the glebe shall be fine cedar and polished mahogany to me; the hands which can make a harrow or a plough can surely make a chair to sit on, and a bed to lie on; my wife and her maidens will spin yarn for the curtains; and the loom which weaves a shepherd's plaid will weave them. I mean the manse to exhibit an example of thrift to my parish." There might be a little of the pride of the primitive in this; but unostentatious simplicity in manses generally prevailed; the linen of ordinary households was spun from lint sown in a neighbouring farmer's ground, and bleached on the nearest burn-bank by the

hands which spun it; the butter, the milk, and cheese, for the kitchen and the hall, came from the cows which were grazing within sight; the fowls which in feasting times smoked on the table were fattened at the nearest barn-door; the dove-cot was at hand to supply an unexpected visiter at the manse; the herbs which seasoned the national dishes grew in the kitchen garden; while over the whole system of in-door economy the mistress of the house considered it her duty to preside in a gown the fruit of her own thrift and skill.

It was well for the vigour and simplicity of the great painter's character that he was bred in such a school. David was a silent though stirring child, and loved, when scarce escaped from his mother's bosom, to draw such figures as struck his young fancy on the sand by the stream-side, on the smooth stones of the field, on the floors of the manse; nor was it unobserved that most of these early scratchings had a leaning towards the humorous and the absurd. He has been heard, when his fame was high, to declare, that he could draw before he could read, and paint before he could spell; nor is it forgotten that he was seen, when a mere child, to sketch a female head with chalk upon the floor; and, on being questioned what he was doing, he answered, "Making bonnie Lady Gonie;" and that the rude outline contained something of the lineaments of Lady Balgonie, whom he had but newly seen at his father's fireside.

From the healthy though rough academy of the open fields, and the smooth stones by the way-side, on which, like the great Giotto, he loved to draw the

forms of sheep and dogs, and horses and soldiers, he was sent, when seven years old, to the parish school of Pitlessie, then under the care of James Diston, a worthy man, with many offices, for he was at one and the same time schoolmaster of Pitlessie, precentor in the church, and clerk to the Kirk Session. David had made some progress in education at home: his mother, an exemplary woman in all matters, not only taught him the alphabet but also to read; so that when he entered the school he took his station in the Bible class. But he was no lover of studies such as the master admired: his heart, he knew not why, took no concern either in lessons of grammar, or questions of arithmetic, but wandered unconsciously, as he has been heard to declare, away to the unbidden realms of art. What he could be doing while stooping behind the desk, with a group of boys and girls crowding about him, was soon discovered by the master, and brought but a gentle rebuke for turning the school into an academy of art, and drawing heads on his slate instead of working questions in Hutton or Dilworth. Of these school-boy portraits I once enquired of one of the sitters, "If they were like?"—"Ou, like! atweel they were like," he said. This school companion knew him as "wee sunny-haired Davie," but was not aware of his eminence in art. When I related this conversation to Sir David, he smiled and said, "I remember it all well: it happened at Pitlessie school; and when I went to the school of Kettle, my reputation had gone before me, and I got no rest till I had drawn—sometimes with pencil, frequently with ink—most of

the head's in the school; but you may be sure that they were rude things." Some of these very early groupings in art are still preserved by his school companions. When he grew into reputation with his bare-footed comrades, he set a value, it is said, on his drawings, and levied the reward of a pencil, or a marble, or a pen, from all whom he did not sketch of free will. Others remember him, while at school, as careless of dress, fond of drollery, and loving play better than his lesson. "I mind him weel," said an old man from the banks of Eden-water; "and I mind his brithers too; but he was a quieter kindlier lad than his elder brithers; and liked better to stand and look on at his companions at their games, than join in their play. I think I see him now standing smiling wi' his hands in his pouches! Ay, but he liked best to lie *a groufe* on the ground with his slate and pencil, making queer drawings!"

The school of Pitlessie is about a mile from the manse of Cults; yet this road seemed long to a boy who, delighted with his own fancies, loved to wander in the fields, and by the bank of the brook, gazing on the changing hues of the sky, on the varying shades of the wood, and on the passing traveller, particularly when a soldier in "old red rags," or a gipsy wife with her horn spoons, and kettles, and asses, came to diversify the road. David was an unwilling scholar, and never could give his mind up to his father's favourite pursuit, arithmetic; and it is certain that at Pitlessie he made but little progress. To the reading which his mother taught him, he soon, indeed, added some skill in writing, which his love of

drawing enabled him to master: but he learned little else; nor was he reckoned at all a quick or a gifted boy. He loved to sit and watch, it is said, the sunbeam as it crept along the school wall, wishing for the time when he would be released, or make drawings of the boys as they stood up in groups to repeat their lessons; he took little delight in studies in which his pencil or his pen could not bestow form and colour. Indeed, he seems during even his boyish days to have observed every striking sight which such an inland place as Cults presented. He has been heard to describe, with a poet's taste and a painter's eye, the smithy of the district on a night of spring: the swart and sweaty brow of the blacksmith; the tawny faces of the ploughmen who had gathered around with their ploughshares and socks; and the flashings of the glowing and hissing iron in a welding heat — all were there: no characteristic touch was wanting to give life to the scene. These were as sure indications of a natural talent for art as a swallow is of summer, or a primrose of spring.

Sometime, perhaps early in the year 1797, David left the school of Pitlessie and went to that of Kettle, about two miles further up the stream of the Eden. The master, Dr. Strachan (now bishop of Toronto), a man of another mood than the schoolmaster of Pitlessie, has been heard to declare that Wilkie was the most singular scholar he ever attempted to teach; that, though quiet and demure, he had an eye and an ear for all the idle mischief that was in hand; that he drew readier than he could write; loved to draw figures on the slates, benches, and walls; and

when his head was down as all imagined at his lesson, instead of mastering his task he was filling the margin of his book with heads in all postures and of all expressions, though the whimsical prevailed. The heads were chiefly imitated from the boys in the classes around. It is remarkable, however, that the memory of his doings is not so rife with his school-fellows under Mr. Strachan as it is with those of Pitlessie: he was indeed not more than fifteen or eighteen months at Kettle school; was more of a stranger in the place; and, as the whole district lay in a state of nature respecting art, none of his companions had the sagacity to discern its tokens.

But, though his heart was set on art, he inherited the mechanical turn of mind peculiar to his race—a surer patrimony than Ratho-Byres. This was visible on many occasions. With no better tools than a knife and a chisel he constructed miniature wind and water mills, frames for winnowing corn, common suction pumps, and carriages for labour and for pleasure: nor did he seem averse to learn the craft of shoemaking, and the trade of weaving; and he is said to have excelled in handling the fore-hammer in the village forge. He has been heard to describe with much accuracy the peculiar position of the shoemaker, when, having passed the bristled points of his thread through the hole made by the awl, he sets his feet out, presses closer his knees, and with compressed lips and bared elbows, pulls the waxen hemp home with a jerk. And he evidently in his day had sat on a loom; for he could give the nod of the weaver's head, the swing of his body, and the very sound which the

sley emitted when the treddles moved, and the shuttle delivered its thread to the warp. When the manse of Cults, an old and tottering fabric, was cast down in the year 1796 and rebuilt, the masons, and after them the joiners, complained of work spoiled and tools blunted during the breakfast and dinner hours: yet they admitted that the hand so busied was one that aimed well; and an old mason, who found David using his tools, declared that aulder heads than his knew less of the geometrical principles of his calling.

No sooner was the manse finished, than David turned the room allotted for the children into an academy. "When in September 1813," says Professor Gillespie of Saint Andrews, "I became minister of Cults, orders were given that the manse should be prepared for my reception, and painters and whitewashers began their labours. On my arrival, on looking at the room which had been the nursery, I observed the dim and half-obliterated outlines of heads and hands visible through the whitewash. On enquiry, I found that these—some of them at least—were the almost infantine attempts at drawing of my friend Sir David; and great was my anger at the tasteless haste with which the orders of purification had been performed. They consisted, I was told, chiefly of portraits, touched into the humorous, of persons who were visiters at the manse, or who frequented the kirk, and were drawn with chalk, charcoal, pencil, keel, nay—ink; for almost any thing was in those days in his hands an instrument of art. His love of character was with him a very early passion: a grey-headed beggarman, a maimed soldier, a limp-

ing sailor, or a mendicant fiddler, were quickly transferred into a little book, which he carried continually in his pocket. When at school I have been told by those who belonged to his class, that though a demure boy, he was a lover of innocent drollery, and fond of drawing up his companions in rank and file, like soldiers, and making them move at his command."

He was, as we have seen, no lover of the labour which learning requires; but when he grew tired, and that was seldom, of making sketches with red or white chalk on the walls or floor, he loved to listen to what Ossian calls "the tale of the times of old;" and great was his delight when some old worthy of the parish dropped into the manse, and related stories of the wars of the Covenant, and the doings of that "malignant, James Graham," the renowned Marquis of Montrose; nor was he an uninterested listener to accounts of the Highland Raid, as the rebellion of 1745 was softly called; and of the tremor which came over the "faithful of Fife," when the Popish Prince had advanced to Derby in quest of the crown. The witches too of Fife, he told me, he had marked out for a picture; and described it as if then present to his fancy: the principal figure was an old woman accused of witchcraft. It was observed of him then that he disliked to listen to a confused story, and never hesitated (and this was true of him in after-life) to turn the narrator back till all was made clear that seemed dark or perplexed. He was from his boyish days an ardent lover of his country; and all found a willing listener in him who came with the names of Wallace

and Bruce on their lips, or could relate any thing of Sir David Lindsay.

When some ten or twelve years old his life, by a piece of boyish imprudence, was placed in the utmost danger; people indeed did not scruple to call his escape from death miraculous. It was his pleasure to throw himself at times on a horse's back, saddled or unsaddled, and indulge in a canter. One evening, about the time that cattle come home from the field, David was found lying in the road near the manse without sense or motion: he had been dragged along the ground, for his hands, still clutched, were full of grass, his cheeks were grazed, and his right foot wanted the shoe, and was much hurt. When he came to himself he said that he coiled up the tether, and pressed the animal into a trot, when he lost his balance and fell off. In his fall his foot got entangled in the tether, and he was dragged along the road till he became insensible. How he was released he never knew, but the shoe by which he had been dragged was afterwards found within twenty or thirty yards from where he was himself picked up. He soon recovered, but this rough gallop cured him of his love of riding barebacked horses: he made most of his future excursions on foot, and was for ever after a very timid horseman.

His attendance at the grammar school of Kettle opened the scenes of his native county a little more to his sight: he had seen soldiers, both cavalry and infantry, and sketched them as he sketched all things that touched his fancy: he now heard for the first time of a review, and accompanied by his younger

brother Thomas set off to see it. In this expedition which drew him to Kirkaldy, he saw what he ever afterwards considered an interesting sight, the measured movements of disciplined men to the word of command, and the excitement of music. He saw the sea too, a sight he had never seen before, with vessels moving upon it: but men riding, ranked, and in order, their plumes waving, and their swords shining in the sun, struck his young fancy most; nor did he rest till he sketched the whole scene, with the cavalry all in motion, and Lord Crawford their colonel directing their movements.

This sketch he copied into a folio book which he seems to have got on purpose for such drawings as were favourites, till a more skilful head, and a more practised hand, eclipsed them by happier things. This folio book is now before me, and contains some score or so of drawings. The figures are slightly coloured, and the fields and woods and waters which belong to them faintly shaded in; they are rude and unartist-like, but remarkable for that sense of quantity and distance which belongs to mathematical minds. They seem to have been sketched during the years 1797 and 1798, and, save in the choice of subject, show, but in few instances, much of the original genius of Wilkie. There is little of the ideal in them; they are very various, however, and are mostly from scenes and sights which had struck his youthful fancy in the land wherein he lived.

The first drawing in the book is the kirk town of Cults: the lessons which he took in masonry while the manse was rebuilding seem to have aided him

little in the sketch of his native village. The second is an officer of the Fife volunteers, stiff rather and formal, and evidently copied from the life. The third is a portrait of himself, round-faced, and somewhat chubby: he is in a short blue coat; his shirt neck is tied with a black ribbon; it has a country air, and that composed look which distinguished him when a man, yet a composure ever ready for either open humour or serious thought. The fourth is Crawford Lodge, a place endeared to him by the courtesy of its proprietor, as well as by the pictures which it contained, two of which were portraits from the hand of Sir Joshua, on which it is said the boy-artist used to gaze by the hour. The fifth is a singular scene: in a wild wood and amid rocks, savage and splintery, he has kindled a fire and hung a pot over it; while beside it, on a stone, sits a man, the sole tenant of the wilderness, who watches the flame climbing up the sides of the pot, and the smoke curling high into the air. He is unshorn and unshaven, and in faint letters may still be read "The Hermit," at the bottom of the page. The sixth represents horses loosened from labour, enjoying their freedom in a grassy field: the animals are well proportioned, and the scene is natural. The seventh is entitled Spring: in the back ground the farmer steps with measured pace along the ploughed field, with a white sheet full of seed corn slung from his shoulder, while with his right hand he distributes the grain equally into the furrows: the foreground is occupied by a lady, evidently designed to be beautiful, with a child just beginning to walk and a dog, all of whom seem to be sensible of the loveliness of the

opening flowers, and to rejoice in the season. The eighth scene is Summer; the scythe of the mower has passed over the fields; women are raking the hay together, and men are turning it to the warm wind, or shaping it into *coles:* the landscape is very fairly indicated. The ninth is Autumn; men are gathering in the fruits of the field; a cart laden with yellow sheaves is on its way to the stack-yard; and the farmer and his dame look with pleasure at ricks rising in the stack-yard, and men stacking them with broom, to preserve them from the storms of winter. Winter comes in the tenth scene, and reigns both in the air and the stream; there is snow in the one, and ice on the other; while a crowd of boys, evidently a school let loose, are sliding on the bosom of the frozen lake: a woman furred to the chin, a man buttoned to the throat, and a boy mantled and mittened, are hurrying in their walk to keep themselves warm, while the sun shines dimly on the scene from a December sky. These four scenes have not a little of the artificial in them; and I suspect are copied rather from prints which he admired than from scenes of his own observation.

The tenth is of a landscape character, and is said to have been suggested to him by the mill of Pitlessie; it has a kiln and a mill weir, and such cottages as are usually huddled round, forming a rustic village, or, what artists love better, a clachan; the roofs have a dusty look, and the weir that rough workmanship in its construction in which Rembrandt delighted. In the eleventh scene, one boy is robbing a raven's nest on the top of a tall and difficult tree, while another is

stringing a bow—which seems of his own shaping—perhaps to shoot at the raven, which is hovering around in the air. Two boys conducting a reluctant dog by a cord round its neck form the twelfth scene, while a third boy has it by the ears, and is trying the persuasion of force; they are making little way, for the dog, though gentle, is strong, and seems to suspect, from the cord and the neighbouring trees, that they intend mischief. The thirteenth scene places us at once in the enchanted ground, where the artist accomplished so many of his enchantments: it is a Peter Bell kind of picture—a tinker giving his ass a drink at a running stream; he has something of the gipsy in his look, with all his dishevelled hair; the love of finery of that wandering race may be seen in his scarlet vest, which, as a matter of the toilet, is out of place with the sooty pans and kettles of which he has disencumbered the animal, evidently with the purpose of kindling a fire and commencing business; the stream runs clear and wimpling, and there are cottages at hand. The fourteenth is a scene of a softer kind: a green field, where a girl is milking a cow, while a young man holds the animal by the neck, for she looks unwilling to relinquish her burthen to an inexperienced hand. The fifteenth is a country picture: a peasant boy returning from a wild wood with a burthen of sapless boughs on his back; he has evidently taken the "sweer-man's load," as the Scots call a too large burthen. The sixteenth is a rustic cottage, half hid in a wood, evidently drawn with the scene before him. The seventeenth is a number of cottages huddled together into a clachan; very comfortable to

live in, no doubt; very picturesque to look at, but as irregular as a clachan can be, where every house seems set down at random. The eighteenth scene is a flock of sheep reposing in a meadow under the shelter of a wood: the sun is yet unrisen; snow—for it is winter—has fallen during the night, and is yet unshaken from their backs; in the neighbouring cottages the morning fires are kindled, and the smoke mounts curling and blue into the air. This is a fine subject, and was to the last a favourite with Wilkie: it was taken from nature. He reckoned the snow on the backs of the sheep, which, compared with their fleeces, has a whiteness of its own, an original touch.

In addition to his passion for drawing all that was of a solitary nature, he used to look with delight on a Highlander in full dress and equipment; his heart, as he observed, warmed to the tartan, not—for he qualified his admiration—as a matter picturesque alone or even natural, but as the distinctive badge or sign of the greater northern tribes. Among Wilkie's early as well as later sketches, are many drawings of Highlanders. "He never visited our northern metropolis," writes Miss Catherine Sinclair, "without honouring us with a visit, and generally dining here. On one of these occasions, having called for pen and ink, he offered to do me a drawing, which he executed while conversing with our family circle during the evening, and having affixed his autograph he desired me to keep it, saying, 'Let this be a memorial that your father, Sir John Sinclair, was the means of making me first fond of drawing. At the time he raised a fencible regiment, he sent the portrait of a Highland

soldier to every Scotch clergyman assisting to write the Statistical Account of Scotland. My father was one of those who received a copy ; it was the first print I ever attempted to copy, and I never ceased to do so, over and over again, till I had succeeded.' We showed Sir David one of the prints, which I still possess, and he hailed it with a burst of pleasure as an agreeable remembrance of his boyhood."

CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN OF HIS FIRST IMPULSE FOR ART. — ADMITTED A STUDENT OF THE EDINBURGH ACADEMY FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF MANUFACTURES. — CHARACTER OF JOHN GRAHAM, THE MASTER. — SIR WILLIAM ALLAN'S RECOLLECTIONS OF WILKIE AT THE TRUSTEES' ACADEMY. — MR. BURNET'S. — HON. W. LESLIE MELVILLE'S. — OBTAINS A PRIZE AT THE ACADEMY. — PAINTS THE FIRST SKETCH OF "THE VILLAGE POLITICIANS," ETC. — MR. GRAHAM'S CHARACTER OF HIS PUPIL AT THIS TIME.

Up to this time Wilkie seems to have been approaching art as a traveller, who, lost in a mist, wanders providentially towards the object of his journey: he had no monitor to hold up the finger, like a saint in a holy picture, and indicate the way to heaven. The land he lived in, beyond a stray portrait by Sir Joshua, had no fine examples in painting, and the whole district of Fife possessed no one who could interpret the silent meaning of an enthusiast who found in every burnt stick a pencil, in every smooth stone a prepared canvass, and in every ragged mendicant a picture. I have been told that, as he grew up, the love of art grew with him: he became restless unless he had a pencil in his hand: when he visited a neighbour he generally left on the walls of the house an indication of his presence; and that to this day, on the walls of the manse of Monimail, there are figures and faces from his boyish

hands. Burns said that his passions raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; Wilkie, though untouched by that burning influence under which the great poet wrote, seemed possessed with a similar spirit, and was never so happy as when putting the sentiments of his heart into shape and form. Very early as well as very late in life he loved to arrange his comrades into pictures, personating some favourite story; nor did he hesitate to enact scenes from "The Gentle Shepherd" of his favourite Allan Ramsay; or to mimic, which he did with peculiar skill, the voice and manner of any well-known character. No one who looked on the quiet and demure boy could, without knowing it, imagine that the dry humour, the sedate glee, and that sense of the ludicrous, which distinguish his nation, were in him in their finest and happiest moods. Those who only knew Wilkie as a great painter, knew but a bit of the man.

It was well for him perhaps that he had no pictures to lead him from the path of his own originality, and no one of influence enough to overrule or misdirect his studies. It is true that in the manse of Monimail he sometimes met with the minister's brother, David Martin, a portrait painter, who had studied under Ramsay in London and Rome, and whose conversation tended to confirm the boy in his inclination to become an artist; but Martin died before Sir David, whose genius tradition avers he influenced, was twelve years of age. His mind was left, as has been said, to find and pursue its own road to distinction; and while he was making the manse of

Cults or the public road his rooms for study, and finding a fit subject for his pencil in an old man, an old chair, a girl milking a cow, a tinker watering his ass, or a flock of sheep when the winter snow was taken from their fleeces, he was all the time rushing unconsciously towards the realms of art, and filling his memory as well as his sketch-book with materials for that fine series of national pictures he was so soon to commence, and in which Scotland's mind, heart and manners, are stamped so brightly. He has been heard to say, that when a boy he looked with an eye of despair on the pictures in oil which he saw in Melville House and Crawford Lodge, and wondered how such effects were produced. He began slowly, he said, to see that all this came from study rather than from chance; and that the wonders of painting were as much the offspring of science and skill as were the sweet sounds of a musical instrument.

When the minister of Cults saw that his son's heart was set on painting, he was, it is said, not a little troubled. He was a sagacious man, and knew how few succeeded in climbing the hill of fame with success as well as honour: nor was he unaware that the pursuit was precarious; that it failed often in bringing even bread to its votaries; and he would have preferred some surer and less slippery path in life than that of art; but, worst of all, he saw not by what means his son could obtain the advantages of models and instruction, such as all students require before they can hope for either fame or bread. In this none of his neighbours could help him, though they did not fail to marvel at the sort of Will-o'-wisp

choice which the son of a minister had made. The elder Wilkie has been blamed for looking with coldness and doubt on the choice of his son; but a father who feels as a father should, could not with any pleasure see his child turn from the sure and beaten path to competence and respectability, and venture on an untrodden way of his own, in which it was doubtful that either honour or wealth, or even subsistence, would be found. He could not know that the light that led his son was light from heaven. It is true that the love of art came on Wilkie early, and came the natural way: had he studied for any other profession, and at the age of twenty-one thrown down the sword, or the pen, or the book, and exclaimed, "Go to! I am a genius, and will be a painter," the impulse might have been questionable. It was otherwise with a child who threw himself on the nursery floor to make a sketch of bonnie Lady Gonie, whose looks were limned on his memory; who neglected his lesson at school to draw his companions; and forgot his duty in the kirk to draw the portrait of a drowsy parishioner: his desire to be an artist came from a natural and settled purpose of soul. His grandfather of Pitlessie Mill, whose mind seems to have been haunted with a desire to see one of his daughter's sons distinguish himself in a pulpit, endeavoured, but in vain, to persuade David, who was a great favourite, to pursue the study of divinity, and quit a profession respecting which he perhaps entertained some secret scruples; but his mother, who shared more in her son's feelings, and knew better his irrepressible desire of heart, encouraged him to persevere, though she

saw he was forsaking the three roads—the army, the kirk, and the law—in which the Scottish youths of his station had hitherto loved to walk.

When Wilkie some forty years afterwards looked back on his early days, and reasoned on the impulse which made painting so dear to his heart, he modestly wrote, "That though a certain faculty, neither easily defined nor understood, is usually recognised as genius, and is considered the great moving power, without which it is vain to attempt even a beginning, much more by continued efforts to hope for excellence,—from all experience of my own I have no consciousness that any attainment which, in the opinion of good-natured people, it has been in my power to reach, was either commenced or promoted by any such innate impulse; on the contrary, the attracting and guiding power seems to have arisen from some external cause. The opportunity of seeing what others are pleased with, together with the stimulation of rival success, were both denied me: the single element in all the progressive movements was persevering industry. Of those who have been led to the study of art as a profession, many will be able to trace their earliest bias to their familiarity with works of art, or with the visible labours of those engaged in producing them. To this kind of initiation I, from peculiar circumstances, can scarcely admit an obligation. Although not excluded from the usual sources of information upon other subjects, it is remarkable that my native district, where the impressions of early years were formed, could then scarcely supply a work of art by which the eye or the taste

could either be excited or depressed: it contained no work of established fame to which I had admission. This peculiarity in the way of my commencement I notice, but with acknowledgments, that, if some helps which students usually have access to were wanting, other aids came to compensate; and whatever knowledge in art was acquired less easily than what is common, was the more readily received, the reflections arising from its acquirement the more sound and the better remembered."

These words, which are transferred from Sir David's too brief autobiography, must be accepted with some modifications: he refuses to acknowledge the genius in its fullest sense, which all the world allows him; and ascribes the finest works of his pencil to accident rather than to a natural vigour and fitness of soul. Work! work! work! was, we know, the motto of Sir Joshua Reynolds, who believed that all men had by birth an equal portion of genius, and that toil well directed did all the rest; to a mere portrait-maker, whose models reside not in his own mind, but come in their coaches, and sit at his call, it is more a work of hand-and-eye than of mind; and even Sir Joshua says, that portrait-painting is a fit profession for a gentleman, since it does not require him to think. But even the excellence of portraiture is very various: those who have done nothing else during a long life but paint likenesses, have been outdone and eclipsed almost in a first attempt by a more inspired artist, who had bestowed little study on the subject. To create a picture in the mind: draw it out in air, and cause it to abide there for

months, nay years, till art and skill and labour unite to embody it on canvass—that seems a work of genius which cannot be accomplished by sweat of brow. It is well said by Ben Jonson, a poet equally distinguished for learning and genius, that "Without art, nature can never be perfect; and without nature, art can claim no being." A man can no more by labour polish a pebble into a diamond, than he can by toil alone, without the native ethereal heat of genius, produce such a picture as "The Village Politicians."

From whatever impulse the desire of being a painter came, Wilkie resolved to obey it. He had profited a little at the grammar-school of Kettle; he had added something to his knowledge at the academy of Cupar, where he remained about a year; he had acquired the ordinary accomplishment of dancing from one of those wandering professors who came to teach the youth of Cupar and Kirkaldy to time their steps to the sound of the fiddle; nay, having naturally a good ear and pliant fingers, he mastered on the violin the simple air of "Haud awa frae me, Donald," and even excelled in "Argyll's Bowling Green," which was long a favourite. Having taught him these, Cults had little more to teach that he cared to know; and with a sketch-book filled with drawings from nature, and a heart that warmed to the glories of art, he resolved to turn his steps towards Edinburgh, where he remembered David Martin told him he would find instructors as well as models. When the minister of Cults saw that his son was resolved to become a painter, or rather that he would bestow his attention on nothing else, he resolved to gratify him;

he consulted some of the wisest heads of the district on this, but all he could get was a dubious shake: he went to some of the most influential, who promised their aid in introductions; while others, to whom he mentioned the taste of his son, openly dissuaded him from an experiment so dangerous, and had instances ready of young men of high promise who resolved to be poets or painters, and who ended their career in poverty and shame. It is part of the character of the race of Wilkie to pursue an object with constancy and fortitude: they say little; they think much; and this was seen in David the elder. He inquired after schools where painting was taught; Rome was mentioned where Gavin Hamilton, Runciman, and David Allan had studied with success, and London, where Allan Ramsay had for awhile shared popular applause with Sir Joshua himself; but Rome was distant, and London expensive, nor was he without fear that his son was not far enough advanced in study to profit by such instruction as began not with the beginning. He heard, however, that the Trustees' Academy of Edinburgh opened its doors to mechanics as well as artists, and withheld instruction in the art of drawing from none who desired it: thither he sent his son in November, 1799, when fourteen years of age.

With specimen drawings in his hand, and an introductory letter from the Earl of Leven in his pocket, Wilkie waited on Mr. George Thomson, then, and long afterwards, secretary to the institution. But his drawings failed to satisfy the eye of that gentleman; he looked at the drawings of the modest and timid boy, reperused the Earl's

letter, shook his head, and finally refused to admit him. But the generous Earl of Leven interposed: he was one of those who thought well of a boy who, in an uncongenial district, turned his mind to matters of elegance and taste, and accepted it as a proof of natural talent; the scruples of the secretary were overcome, and the name of David Wilkie was entered in the books. The exact date of his admission I tried to obtain, but was informed that when the books of the Board of Trustees were removing to the present building many were destroyed, and the one with the date of Sir David's admission among the number; the like fate, it seems, befel those volumes which contained the account of the prizes which he obtained, and the date of his leaving the academy. "I, for one," Sir David used to say, when reflecting in after life upon the difficulty which attended his admission to the Trustees' Academy,—"I, for one, can allow no ill to be said of patronage; patronage made me what I am, for it is plain that merit had no hand in my admission." Influenced, it is likely, by this, as well as by the experience afforded by a wide intercourse with the world, he wrote a discourse on the subject; and in a very happy vein exhibited art flourishing under government patronage in foreign lands, and under individual patronage at home.

George Thomson, however, did not err much in hesitating, from his specimen drawings, to admit Wilkie; for up to the hour that he gained admission, his best works were far from such as would have secured him a probationer's ticket in one of the higher academies. They were well imagined, well

chosen, and well considered things, but executed in a way unseemly and rough: yet in them might be seen, as the divinity which shone out in the Greek marbles was observed in the elder wooden figures of the land, a ray or so of that bright humour and moral feeling with which he was soon to astonish his country. Now an Academy never sits in judgment upon originality of genius; a smooth, fair, passable drawing is all that is required of a student; the natural power is taken for granted; and thus the land swarms with those who can copy, but cannot conceive — who can imitate what others have done, but who are unable to produce any thing new for others to copy. A better test is wanted — the Academy should only admit those who can show something of their own: the proof of poetry lies not in smooth or skilful translation, neither should the ability to draw well either the Venus or the Apollo give admission to a student. Had originality been the test, and the secretary of the Trustees' Academy a judge of the article, Wilkie would have been admitted at once. He was, however, admitted, and that, it must be confessed, at a favourable hour.

The masters of the Trustees' Academy would seem for half a century to have been slumbering in their chairs. Their salaries were small, their scholars few, and a love of the art which they taught was all but extinguished in the land. Runciman had indeed brought a Fuseli-like flightiness to the task of instruction; and David Allan, though deficient in the proprieties of his art, had added a taste for rustic humour and literal truth of detail, in which

men see glimpses of Wilkie; but neither of them had succeeded in stamping their own character either on the classes or on individual minds, and the Academy was unable to boast of having produced a single scholar of eminence. A change of measures, as well as of masters, occurred about the time that Sir David entered; the chair had, it seems, been obtained by an artist, whose name is now forgotten, through the influence of drawings which his own hand had not the skill to make: he was ejected from the mastership as soon as this was discovered, and John Graham elected in his stead. The new master was a native of the north; a student, too, of the school of nature, for he was bred a coach-painter, but forsaking coach-panel for canvass, and coats of arms for higher subjects, he painted the "Death of General Fraser"—the "Fraser brave" of Burns—with such success that it obtained—nay kept—the early admiration of Wilkie, for an engraving of it hung constantly in his study. Graham painted, too, the "Death of David Rizzio" with much approbation, a subject taken up soon afterwards by Opie, and treated with much force: this the Scottish artist said was unfair in the Cornish wonder, and never forgot to mention it when he recounted all the envies and jealousies to which artists are heirs. He was a kind and ardent-minded man, and had the tact of inspiring the scholars with his own enthusiasm: he introduced for the first time painting with oil into the Academy, and the institution of premiums, and loved to relate, with some dramatic effect, the opposition which individual tastes and interests raised against these measures. "Will oil

colours," said the manufacturer, "as bright as those of Titian, add any lustre to a gown-piece, or a new charm to the flower and leaf on a table-cloth or carpet?" "Or will my apprentice," said the map engraver, "when he learns the magic of Rembrandt's colouring, become more skilful in etching the sinuosities of a sea-coast, or in engraving an invitation card?"

If the merits of Graham were sought in the eminence of his scholars, they would be easily found. The first of these was William Allan*, now president of the Royal Scottish Academy, worthily filling, and with great increase of fame, the chair of his master: the second was John Burnet, whose exquisite engravings from the paintings of his great schoolfellow scarcely surpass the labours of his own pencil in the line of grave humour and social glee: the third was Alexander Fraser, well and widely known for domestic painting: the fourth was David Thomson, brother of the secretary, in whom many fondly saw a fine landscape painter, but who died young: and fifth, and last, and at his entry reckoned the least in merit of all I have named, stands David Wilkie himself, "who was soon to convince his more lively companions that high genius did not refuse to lodge with one who had a country air, was slow of speech, and bashful of manner, and had none of 'the snip-snap short, and interruption smart' of the pert and sprightly lads of the town." For it is in these words that Burnet de-

* Now Sir William Allan, R.A., and Wilkie's successor in the office of Limner to the Queen for Scotland.

scribes the impression which Sir David made on him when they met in the Academy of Edinburgh.

"My first acquaintance with Sir David Wilkie," says his friend William Allan, "was at Graham's Academy in Edinburgh, which opened, I think, in the year 1800. The class was newly formed, and I was placed along with him to copy a set of outlines of eyes, noses, &c., and we continued together copying from various examples until qualified to draw from the round (casts from the antique), of which there were several excellent specimens introduced at that time into the Academy by Graham, who was the first to give an impulse to art, and to move the enthusiasm of the rising class of artists of that period. During the time that Wilkie attended the Academy, no one could be more regular and industrious: whatever he commenced he finished, and that well. There being only a few casts, we were compelled to draw them often: but he remarked, 'that this was to our advantage, as it enabled us to get them by heart.' He seemed to have, even at that early period, an innate feeling for character and expression, as the best of many of his drawings done at the Academy can testify: in particular, a sketch of Graham reading; so full of expression, and done with such a masterly hand, as seemed to me then to be little less than a miracle."

"The progress he made in art," continues the president of the Scottish Academy, "was marvellous. Every thing he attempted indicated a knowledge far beyond his years; and he soon took up that position in art which he maintained to the last. He was always on the look-out for character: he frequented trystes,

fairs, and market-places, where there is generally a large assemblage of the country people of all ages bargaining or disposing of their various commodities. These were the sources whence he drew his best materials: there he found that vigorous variety of character impressed on his very earliest works, which has made them take such a lasting hold on the public mind. I met him frequently too in an auction-room in the High Street, where prints and etchings were exhibited previous to their being disposed of. Those from Rembrandt and Ostade attracted him much: at that time, I believe, he had not seen an original picture by either of those great masters, and yet the subjects he then painted partook largely of both; sharing in the fine composition and drawing of the one, and the great depth and powerful colouring of the other."

The houses in which eminent men lived are thought worthy of remembrance—their presence may be still said to hallow the place. Wilkie took lodgings in Nicholson Street, and there, in a small room, he first set up his easel and commenced his studies. He was as punctual as time itself to the hours allowed for study in the Academy: these were from ten to twelve in the day; for as the chief object of the founders was to improve the pattern of our manufactures, the time of study was made purposely short, that journeymen of taste and apprentices who desired to excel in matters of elegance might be enabled to attend at as small a loss as possible. House-painters, engravers, weavers, pattern-makers, all, in short, in whom a love of the beautiful was awakened, were to be found in the Academy classes. There would Wilkie sit silent and

attentive, regarding but with a grave eye the little episodes of harmless drollery which are common to all academies, or noticing, with a scarcely perceptible smile, the practical joke which he eluded and let pass. To improve our manufactures and render more graceful the flowers and the buds from the looms of Glasgow and Dumfermline, or to waste his time in sallies of lively drollery with the idle portion of the students, was not his object: he had set his mind a higher task, and he resolved to work it out.

"When Wilkie came to our class," says Burnet, "he had much enthusiasm of a queer and silent kind, and very little knowledge of drawing: he had made drawings, it is true, from living nature in that wide academy the world, and chiefly from men or boys, or such groups as chance threw in his way; but in that sort of drawing on which taste and knowledge are united, he was far behind others who, without a tithe of his talent, stood in the same class. Though behind in skill, he, however, surpassed, and that from the first, all his companions in comprehending the character of whatever he was set to draw. It was not enough for him to say 'draw that antique foot, or draw this antique hand;' no, he required to know to what statue the foot or the hand belonged; what was the action, and what the sentiment. He soon felt that in the true antique the action and sentiment pervaded it from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and that unless this was known, the fragment was not understood, and no right drawing of it could be made. When he knew the meaning, he then began, and not till then, to outline it in, studiously and

slowly; telling those who reproached him with being tardy, that the meanest figure in the humblest group in the works of every great artist had a meaning and a character. One of his earliest copies from the antique was a Niobe's head in red chalk; but before this he had drawn a series of noses, eyes, and ears, and also a foot, which his father, now proud of his son's progress, showed to some of the good people of Cults as the first of his studies. 'And what is it, sir?' enquired the man of Fife; tradition says he was one of the elders of Cults. 'It is a foot,' replied the minister. 'A foot!' exclaimed the elder in surprise; and taking a second look, 'A foot! it's mair like a fluke (*i. e.* a flounder) than a foot.' Perhaps it is of this drawing that Haydon says, 'The foot is a good foot, awkwardly shaded, but correctly drawn; and is now in my possession, the gift of Wilkie.'"

When Allan left the Academy, Burnet, Thomson, and Wilkie were regarded as the ablest of the scholars of Graham: the first for quickness of perception and dexterity of hand; the second for what was called historical loftiness; and the third and last for original observation. Burnet, who had his studies in engraving to attend to, could give but a little of his time to drawing; Thomson I have heard described as one of those flashy artists, with more show than substance; while Wilkie, in whom the desire of painting came through nature, rather than inoculation, began gradually to gain the ascendant. When, therefore, the master announced that he had prevailed on the trustees not only to allow studies in oil to be painted from historic or poetic subjects, but to grant small

premiums for the best performances, there was an anxiety among the students, and some curiosity in the city, to know what the subject was, and consider who was likeliest to carry away the honour. The subject was left to be found by each competitor in the tragedy of Macbeth; for the master observed that Burnet, Thomson, and Wilkie, who were selected, would each choose a part after his own heart and powers, and thus bring their peculiar talents out. The first chose the scene with the sinking of the caldron; the second the murder of Banquo in the forest; and the third Macduff's castle, with Lady Macduff defending her little son from the murderers. The mingled light and darkness in which the charmed caldron sank was the chief attraction in the painting of Burnet; the landscape with the torches flashing amid the boughs of the forest was impressive in Thomson; while the fine expression of the head of young Macduff was the most effective part of that of Wilkie. The prize was awarded to Thomson; not without suspicion amongst some that his brother, the secretary, had silently influenced the decision. Wilkie, if disappointed, endured it with a modest tranquillity peculiar to himself; and so little did he attribute injustice to George Thomson, that he loved to speak of him with kindness and even affection in the days of his fame.

The loss of the books of the Trustees' Academy in which the subjects for competition, with the value of the prizes and the names of those who gained them were recorded, hinders me from tracing with accuracy the progress of Wilkie, and stating how often he

was victor or vanquished in this obscure field of fame. The subjects were generally from history or from poetry, and the premiums were in money. The master with whom the choice of the subject remained never, it would seem, imagined that in the domestic or lyric poetry of Scotland the painter would find matter sufficiently lofty for his pencil; and overlooking a series of songs, which, for graphic truth, ease and life, pastoral sweetness, and rural glee, have no parallel in modern composition, travelled into classic times, and sought among the exhausted masters of heathen song and fable for themes for his scholars. Such was the taste then, and it is much the same still: our academies take the tone and colour of their works from Rome, the fountain-head of classic composition, and seldom seek to give shape and sentiment to matters which would warm a British heart as the works of Greece warmed Grecian hearts of old. A home-born taste is making its way slowly; few of our sculptors seek now to restore the forgotten gods of the heathen to their pedestals: and few of our painters try to charm us with Venus and her girdle, or Calypso and her enchanted cup. At the time, however, of which I write, far-fetched subjects were in full force, north as well as south; and though David Allan had tried to win the taste of Scotland back to matters rural and national, his ineffectual efforts went to show that the master spirit was wanting, that the time and the man had not yet come.

Wilkie seems now and then, even in his probation days, to have been about to lift the veil from that series of beautiful pictures which visited his thoughts,

and appeared, as it were, in vision before him; to have all but stumbled over the border of that terra incognita in which he was soon to perform his wonders. He had no other pursuit of either pleasure or subsistence to divide his thoughts; he had not, as many have, to come wearied from the toil of an ungenial occupation, to bestow an hour or two on a study which requires man's whole heart and soul. He laid down, as Hume did, a scheme of life and of study from which he had the fortitude never to depart. He resolved to be frugal, for the small stipend of Cults, with four boys and a girl depending on it, required some care; and he was sensible that in choosing art for a profession, he had staked his all on a desperate cast, and that he must win or die. He was therefore watchful in his expenditure, and careful in his choice of companions: of a frame too delicate to share in the robust amusements of the stirring lads of "Auld Reekie," he loved to wander in his leisure hours about the streets and squares, observing the masons at their daily toil, carmen with their teams, and more particularly the groups which crowded the Grass Market or the High Street, bringing with them that country-like or rural air, by which the people of the vale and hill are distinguished from those of the city. It has been said by those who were in the dark about the resources of an inland place such as Cults, that Wilkie, when risen into fame, had still before his eyes a fine picture by Brouwer, whose best works, while a boy, he contemplated with much delight. But of Brouwer, when a boy, he had not even heard. "He made," says Burnet, "nature his Ostade and his Teniers; and Carse, with

his fine tone of colour, his Rembrandt and Jan Stein. Next to nature he loved the works of David Allan; and as Raphael is traced in Pietro Perugino, so may David the First be traced, but in a loftier degree, in David the Second. Wilkie, as you may see in some of his pictures, did not hesitate to avail himself of several of Allan's attitudes: I can see this even in the Chelsea Pensioners; but the one was always within the circle of taste and propriety, while the other, even in his happiest works, seldom seems to have observed such limits, which are easier felt than defined. In his early study of character, his skill, his more than skill, in seizing nature in her negligence and happiest moods, may be found the origin of his vast success in representations of familiar manners and domestic life."

In the year 1803, as Thomas MacDonald* tells me, who was in the Trustees' Academy with Wilkie, the subject selected for the ten guinea premium was that of Calisto in the bath of Diana: this was won by Sir David, who turned his thoughts on home when the money was in his pocket, and purchased and presented a small token of remembrance to his mother, whose tenderness was seldom out of his mind.† The picture still exists‡, together with that from Macbeth: the effect in parts of both is said to be fine. He was

* Mr. MacDonald died in the summer of 1842.

† With part of the prize-money he purchased a silver watch, now in the possession of his nephew Andrew Wilkie, at Calcutta.

‡ The "Diana and Calisto" was sold in the sixth day's sale of the Wilkie Sketches for 48*l.* 6*s.* Another early picture, "Ceres in search of Proserpine," was sold the same day for 3*l.* 10*s.*, and is now in the possession of Mr. Hogarth.

successful, too, in other subjects, and laid out the money in prints and pencils, and materials such as the easel required. Nor was he unmindful of the attention which the Leven family had paid him. "I remember," thus writes the Hon. William Leslie Melville, "that my father, touched by the modest spirit of the boy, recommended him as a student to the Board of Trustees for Improvement of Manufactures in Scotland, of which he was a member; but the drawings—a house and a tree—which young Wilkie submitted to George Thomson, the secretary, seemed to him so defective both in perspective and colouring, that he hesitated to admit him, and told my father that the boy had entirely mistaken his talents. One of my brothers writes me as follows:—When Sir David was in Scotland in 1839, he came to Melville House; we have three little pictures from his hand of dogs and sheep: on showing them to him he said, 'That dog I copied from a print, the sheep I drew from nature. Some people at Cults had praised my drawings, and I remember quite well bringing them to the great house, and wondering as I came how I would be received. Your father was very kind; he praised my drawings, and afterwards helped me.' I happened to be at home when he called with the drawings—it was after his admission to the Trustees' Academy—and walking with him through the house, showed him what pictures there were—chiefly family portraits. I called afterwards on him at Cults manse, and saw with other drawings some heads in a psalm book with a good deal of expression, made, I fear, at church, from some of the congregation: these, I think, were introduced

into his picture of Pitlessie Fair. I regret that I can recollect nothing more of him in these interviews save the simplicity and modesty of his personal demeanor."

While studying in the Trustees' Academy he made some progress in portrait-painting, beginning with heads in small, and gradually expanding them as confidence and skill increased, till he reached the size of life. Of the miniature size many portraits still exist, some in pencil, others in oil, and some in water colours. A number are single heads, others are in groups: like the family conversation pieces of Hogarth, they, one and all, bear the evidence of fidelity and truth of expression: the smallest are the best: his deficiencies, both in drawing and colour, become more visible the larger the heads grow: his chief defect lay in believing that perfect fidelity of form was the leading requisite: he did not feel at that time that propriety which brings the coarsest countenance within the science of art, and lends grace and elegance to portraiture—the charm which Vandyke and Reynolds knew—was as necessary in likeness as it is in all else that claims to belong to true painting. When he chose to put the head into action, when he imagined that it joined in the sentiment of some group, the expression lighted up the countenance at once; but when, on the contrary, he put the head into that repose which pertains to the unemployed, he ventured to take no liberties, but contented himself with that sort of fidelity which all can swear to, but few can admire. Of these intellectual faces, there is a drawing made during the days of academic study of the mother of Thomas MacDonald, a Scottish matron, on which is

written, as plain as in a book, the mild and shrewd sagacity in the depicting of which he excelled. The heads, too, which he drew unseen of the master of the Academy (there were many of them, some reading, and others conversing), were all, it is said, indicative of the native understanding, and joyous and sarcastic humour of Graham. Nor should the miniature which, in 1803, he made of his favourite brother Thomas, then in a merchant's office at Leith, and which he finished in a few sittings in Nicholson Street, be excluded from the list of his very early and happy things: it was like then, and is like still; and has a touch, a very slight touch, of that grave humour which is a reigning characteristic of the race.

Those who sought Wilkie in Edinburgh, either found him drawing at the Academy, or pursuing his studies in his lodging, or hunting for characters to work into pictures, which he now began to contemplate. His progress in study was unexampled; his roughness of handling softened into grace and ease; his crude and heavy colouring into brightness and harmony; and the heads which he had drawn at random, and only because they were odd or remarkable, he now began to employ in groups which portrayed manners or embodied sentiment. All this was perceived by his companions, and they vied with each other in suggesting subjects to suit the genius which they believed would soon flash out. MacDonald—an admirer of Burns, and who had him by heart—never was tired in reciting Tam-o'-Shanter, and loved to press on Wilkie the pictorial excellence of that passage where Tam grows joyous with the buxom landlady,

while his crony the Souter charms the landlord with his queerest stories. To all this the young painter replied with one of his quiet doubtful smiles, or said that the figures in the poem were too few to enable him to work out the story over which he brooded; beside, the sentiment of Burns was not controversial, but licentious. Now it happened at this time, that Hector Macneil's ballad of "Scotland's Skaith, or Will and Jean"—which caused a wondrous stir, and a cry that Burns had come again, which has ceased now—made its appearance. In the verses which describe the country tippling club, and the resolution of the members to meet oftener over their potations and politics,—for twice a week did not afford leisure to settle the constitution of the country, nor to discuss the sentiments of The Gazetteer,—Wilkie saw what he wanted, and instantly made a sketch. This bit of pasteboard, which contains the true first-fruit of his genius, is but a rough affair, ill digested and crude, but exhibiting a singular force, and a sort of intrepid wildness of conception and character, much tamed down in the two pictures which originated in this. The central group, the finest thing of the kind in all our island school of art, is nearly alike in all: the wriggling and sagacious old head which presides, with its three controversial companions, has suffered little change; but the accessories, which in the first sketch represent vulgar souls in whom contradiction and deceit have called up the savage, and made them fit for treason, stratagem, and spoil, are sobered prodigiously down.

With this scene, objected to by some of his com-

rades as overstepping the academic rules of grouping and drawing, but defended by others of his friends as true to the times and the subject, and therefore natural and legitimate art, Wilkie himself was so much pleased that he resolved to enlarge the size, transfer it to panel, and commit it to the more lasting keeping of oil colour. This task took him several months to accomplish: he was never a rapid worker; nor one who dashed in at a single heat of fancy any even of his more hurried productions. He meditated on the subject for some time, filled his mind with the memory of the political ferment of his youth, when every smithy had its evening group of agitators, and every change-house its club of orators, who discussed the merits of the ale, and descanted on the rights of man. Wilkie took few or none into his counsels; he had a dread of that multitude of advisers, in whom the wise man says there is safety; he modified and purified the whole composition, selected characters to sit for the principal heads, and help him to the proper lights and darks of the composition, and, using his colours with all the skill the Trustees' Academy had taught him, produced to his wondering comrades this first of his easel pictures — yet to be eclipsed in all, save a certain brightness of colours, by the second on the same subject which he painted in London, for the Earl of Mansfield — now known over the world by the name of The Village Politicians. This first easel picture, which the painter afterwards called a sketch, is now in the hands of his early admirer Dr. Darling

In his seventeenth year, and before The Village Politicians had dawned on his fancy, he painted a

small picture from his favourite author, Allan Ramsay, embodying that fine scene in The Gentle Shepherd, where Sir William returning from exile in the disguise of a seer or spaeman, finds his only son, who had been for safety educated in ignorance of his birth by Symon and Elspa, dancing in a group of rustics, and offers to tell his fortune. The incredulous look with which Patie hears the proposal; the wonder of Elspa when the seer describes his tokens; the tranquil sagacity of Symon; and the half-believing glance of Glaud, when he requests to hear the like good fortune foretold to his "twa sonsy lasses," with the lasses themselves, plump and ripe, are all depicted, and in truth of character and glowing colours, by the boy-painter. A single look at the work will show how clearly these words are embodied:—

Elspa. Betooch us to! and weel I wat that's true!
Awa! awa! the deil's owre grit wi' you.
Four inch aneath his oxter is the mark,
Scarce ever seen since he first wore a sark.
Sir William. I'll tell ye mair — if this young lad be spar'd
But a short while, he'll be a braw rich laird.
Symon. Fair fa' your heart — 'tis gude to bode o' wealth;
Come, turn the timmer to laird Patie's health.
Patie. A laird o' twa gude whistles and a kent,
Twa curs my trusty tenants on the bent,
Is a' my great estate, and like to be,
Sae cunning carle ne'er break yere jokes on me.
Glaud. Weel, b'it sae, friend, I shall say naething mair,
But I've twa sonsy lasses, young and fair,
Plump, ripe for men: I wish ye cou'd foresee
Sic fortunes for them, might prove joy to me.

In another spirit (for the subject was found in a far different book), Wilkie painted from the tragedy by

Home, young Douglas telling his mother how he learned the art of war. The melancholy hermit, the shaggy cave, and the enthusiastic listener are well-delineated. The sentiment of the picture lies in these words:—

Douglas. Pleas'd with my admiration, and the fire
His speech struck from me, the old man would shake
His years away, and act his young encounters.
Then, having shew'd his wounds, he'd sit him down,
And all the live-long day discourse of war.
To help my fancy, — on the smooth green turf
He'd cut the figures of the marshall'd hosts,
Describ'd the motions and explain'd the use
Of the deep column and the lengthen'd line,
The square, the crescent, and the phalanx firm.

These pictures have since been sold.* The latter is a subject on which the artist could not well bestow much heart; the former comes home to the feelings, and has such beauty, particularly in the Gentle Shepherd himself and one of the shepherd-maidens, as he never excelled: it wants, however, some of that propriety of arrangement and dramatic skill in which he afterwards surpassed. The scene is laid on the little green plot of ground before Symon's house; and the old trees, old cottage, and old people, are all in a glow of rich colour. Though he often found the scenes of his pictures in the open air, he seems to have loved interiors most, less for the aid of picturesque odd furniture, of which he was not insensible, than for that free and unrestrained thought which he associated more with firesides and stools than with brooks and braes. He sketched an interior

* The subject from the Gentle Shepherd sold for 28 guineas (now in Mr. Thomas Wilkie's hands); Douglas and the Hermit for 10*l*.

of a cottage from another scene in The Gentle Shepherd; but, perhaps, not satisfied with what he had done, he did not carry it to the easel. The truth of his younger brother's remark may be seen in these as much as in his after compositions, that he loved to hear the husbandmen sing at their work, the lasses sing at the wheel, and used to study with much attention the postures into which the performance of domestic duties threw them.

It is related by some who were Wilkie's fellow-students in Edinburgh, that the more restless of their number, when they saw him musing much, or in a study, often tried to tease, but could never perplex, or put him out, as they said. He received all such interruptions with tranquillity of looks, and though they sometimes put their jokes into a practical form, he never remonstrated nor complained, but was resolved to overcome them by imperturbable good humour, as he seemed determined to conquer them in art by resolution and study. He was often in those days heard to say, but in an under-tone, with Burns—

> "Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
> Thou stalk of carle-hemp in man."

And from this he never swerved nor shrunk. When his fellow-students followed him into his two-pair-of-stairs study in Nicholson Street, they found all in keeping, they said, with his demeanour in the Academy. The Bible and The Gentle Shepherd, a sketch or two on the wall, a table and a few chairs, with a fiddle whose strings, when he grew tired with drawing, he touched to a favourite air, were the chief

articles: neither lay-figures covered with silk, nor easels of polished mahogany were there; a few brushes, and a few colours, and palette made by his own hands, may be added. The fiddle was to him then and long after an useful instrument; its music, he said, not only soothed himself, but put his live models who sat for his shepherds and husbandmen into the sort of humour which he desired; nay, he often pleased so much, that one of them, an old rough mendicant—

"Whose wallets before and behind did hang,"

to whom he had played a welcome air, refused the pence when offered, and strode down the stair, saying, "Hout! put up your pennies, man; I was e'en as glad o' the spring as ye were!" He sometimes, too, in a land where living models of any other part save the head or hand are difficult to obtain for either love or money, made himself into his own model; and with a bared foot, a bared ancle, or a bared knee, would sit at the looking glass till he confessed that he was almost benumbed by exposure. Nor did he desist when a friend knocked; he would say, "Come in," nor move from his posture, but deliberately explain his object, and continue to draw till he had made the sketch.

Some time in the year 1804 Wilkie quitted the Trustees' Academy: he left it with the good wishes and regrets of all; for he was loved much for his good nature, as well as admired for his talents. With a letter written afterwards by his master to the Rev. David Wilkie of Cults, we shall conclude

his studies in Edinburgh:—"I look upon it," says Graham, "not as altogether sufficient barely to instruct youth in the actual mode or practice of the profession; but also to inform their minds with a correct sense of what is proper, in order that they may act for themselves and towards others as good men, without which they never can be good artists. I feel much pleasure in informing you, that of all the young men who have been under my care, none of them appeared to me, either to be so desirous to learn or so attentive, when I gave them my opinion, as your son David. I have seen some doubts expressed by the critics, whether his talents were equal to the higher line of art. They know him not. He is capable of carrying through the most elevated and elegant part of his art, perhaps with as much success as those subjects from which he has merited so much praise. The more delicacy required in the execution of a subject, the more successful he will be. In some of his first essays in painting when with me, he then evinced a degree of taste which bore a great resemblance to the manner of Correggio, who ranks amongst the highest masters of the art." This letter is remarkable for holding out the finger, as it were, to the higher path which at a future day he was destined to pursue.

CHAPTER III.

RETURNS TO CULTS.—CHARACTER OF DAVID ALLAN.—PAINTS "PITLESSIE FAIR."—SEES AND OBTAINS A LAY-FIGURE FOR THE FIRST TIME.—PAINTS SEVERAL PORTRAITS AND THE PICTURE OF "THE VILLAGE RECRUIT."—STARTS FOR LONDON.

He was little more than eighteen years of age when, having acquired all the Trustees' Academy could then teach, and which Wilkie never rated highly, he returned to his father's manse, with a taste hovering between a love of subjects of a domestic and dramatic nature, to which he felt fame belonged, and to the equally domestic and more popular line of portrait painting, which he could see that fortune followed. A natural taste and an in-born genius inclined him to the first; but the necessity of his fortunes obliged him to work at the other, and for a time he united both. As the head of the former he looked up to David Allan, whose fame had some time before risen in the north from his designs, conceived in a truly pastoral spirit, for Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd—a drama which Wilkie himself, towards the close of his short and brilliant career, informed me it was his purpose to embellish. Nor was Allan unknown from want of pictures of a more ambitious reach—his Highland Dance, Penny Wedding, and Repentance Stool, had their influence on the popular mind; who

saw in them that Scottish manners and character had at length found a painter. Nor were the words of the poet of Scotland then a secret, who said that he regarded David Allan and Robert Burns as the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume (both of body and mind) in the world.

It is true that in the works of David Allan there is little of that dramatic skill in which Hogarth and Wilkie so excel; almost none of those proprieties of composition or of handling which belong to natural taste, and which, with higher qualities, compose the genius without which nothing great or impressive can be achieved; nor yet has he much to spare of that quiet rustic witty grace, the sure inheritance of the clouted shoe of the north. But he had an eye for the ludicrous, and a taste for drollery and humour, great skill in delineations of old odd wives, queer old cottages with older furniture, and in giving the realities of life and nature as he found them. He seemed deficient in the finer sensibilities of the heart, and little acquainted with lofty emotions.

To portrait painting Wilkie was not only attracted by bread, but by fame of old standing, which had reached from Jameson, the first true portrait-painter of the isle, to Ramsay and to Raeburn; the second of whom had acquired a fortune, and the third fame and fortune too. Raeburn, even while Wilkie studied in Edinburgh, stood at the head of his art in the north undisturbed by a rival. His style was manly and vigorous; he entered little into the detail of the face, but called the mind into the countenance, and fixed it there with a happiness of expression in which he

found few who shared. He lived in affluence and hospitality, visited and dined among the first born of the land, and had a residence and a gallery of a splendour new to Scottish art. All this could not but be present to the mind of Wilkie when he turned his thoughts on the profession he had chosen, and calculated its chances: he was conscious of uncommon powers; and these were accompanied by a modest and temperate ambition, whose equal and continuous warmth was less likely to cool or die than those sudden flashings out, mistaken sometimes for the steady fire of genius. He had freed himself from the fetters of the Academy, slight as they were; he had retired to the solitude of Cults, and had now to look about for a subject on which he might try his talents. He hesitated, I have heard, in the choice of a domestic scene, between a field preaching and a village fair; but the latter prevailed, for he was fearful of the charge of profanity, urged by many against The Holy Fair of Burns; and as the neighbouring village of Pitlessie had in its season a fair, had much too of the queer picturesque which the painter loved, and possessed original characters sufficient of its own, with those of the adjoining district, to people whole acres of canvass, he resolved to choose this for the scene of his meditated picture, and to call it The Country Fair.

All this seems to have been settled in his own mind in the summer of 1804; for he thus writes in August to one of his fellow-students in Edinburgh:—"I have now fairly begun to The Country Fair. I have the advantage of our herd-boy and some children who

live about the place as standers; and I now see how superior painting from nature is to any thing that our imagination, assisted by our memory, can conceive." He had, with that diligence for which he was ever remarkable, already visited Pitlessie, and made what may be called a working sketch of the place—house, and street, and stream—and drawn in rough masses the various groups whom business or pleasure had called to the market; then stretching canvass on a frame, the largest he had yet used, measuring twenty-five inches high, and forty-four inches wide, he desired to begin, but was in want of an easel. A ready hand never lacks a tool: a chest of drawers stood in the room; he pulled out the centre drawer; placed the lower side of the canvass upon it; and leaning the upper part against the cornice, found it to answer in every way; and, as he told his fellow-student Fraser, he never had a handier easel in his life, or one on which he painted better.

But when he had sketched the scene of the picture in large on the canvass, he had then to select his characters with which to people his landscape. These he went to seek at Pitlessie on a market day. He saw, as he went, every townland and glen send forth its people, and, when he reached the village, he found the street, a long and somewhat winding one, occupied with shoemakers selling shoes, weavers selling webs, rustics selling hens and ducks, lasses selling fresh butter and eggs, and old women with stall or basket selling sugar-candy and sugar-plums: over all was heard the voice of a travelling auctioneer who sold coloured beads and striped ribbons for the gayer part

of the audience, while the voice of a ballad-singer vending provincial verse mingled its dolorous tones with the "any one bids more" of the other. We may add to these sights and sounds the recruiting sergeant with his ribbons streaming in the air, the drum summoning the martial lads of Cults to the path of glory; and the lowing of cattle in the distance, from whose goaded steps the wandering dealer in tea-dishes and jugs can scarce protect her brittle ware; while watching all, without seeming to do so, walk the grave dignitaries of the district—the ministers and elders—not insensible, as they go, to the charms of the lasses who enter now in bevies into the joys of the fair.

But he soon found that to take a portrait while walking or riding was one thing, and to limn it while the sitter was beside the easel, and the artist had all his appliances around him, was another; but how to obtain such leisurely sittings perplexed him, for the magnates of Strath-Eden opposed many obstacles, some on the score of vanity, some on that of religion, to have their faces recorded in the scenes of a fair. As a last resource, Wilkie one day, during sermon, saw one of the characters marked out for his picture nodding in his seat in the kirk; he glanced his quiet eye on him, and applying his pencil—it was one of red chalk—to the blank leaf of his Bible, fairly sketched him off without any one being aware. After the slumbering he ventured on those awake, with equal success, but not with like secrecy. All the notables of Pitlessie, with his douce grandfather included, found their way to book or to paper, and from thence to the canvass; nor were they quite aware of the extent of his limn-

ings till the picture itself was finished, and then it is said — I quote the words of one who seems to have been well informed — "Into this piece he has introduced about one hundred and forty figures, most of which are portraits. Among these are his father and several of the farmers and rustics of the village, whose likenesses he took at church, for which profane conduct, as the rigid Presbyterians would deem it, very heavy complaints were made to the father of the youthful artist."* What answer he made to their complaint was not known till lately, when Professor Gillespie informed me that Sir David, on being expostulated with, said that any one who practised portrait painting knew that the ear was not engaged in the work, for, being a business of the eye and hand alone, he could draw as well as listen. Some of our most eminent artists encourage their sitters to converse with them while their portraits are in hand; thus confirming the words of Wilkie, and those of Reynolds also, who said that portrait painting required no thought.

This picture was painted for Kinnear of Kinloch, a gentleman of Fife, the first of the land who perceived the genius of Wilkie. It has a great variety of incident and character: the figures are, though numerous, finely grouped; and notwithstanding the bustle of the scene, there is no crushing or crowding. The colouring has been said by a critic to be too uniform and glowing, and that it wanted cool colours to give value

* To MacDonald he writes, in December, 1804, "I have not got the Fair finished yet, but it is pretty well on, and people of all ranks come to see it."

and contrast to the warm ones: others have said that it wants something of Wilkie's after-clearness of tone and touch, which was probably to be imputed to his inexperience in the method of painting in oil. The great merit of the picture is in its variety of character, and in the drama-like way in which the story of the scene is evolved: no domestic picture of such high merit had been produced before in Scotland. Wilkie in the year 1812 observes to Sir George Beaumont,— "the picture of the Country Fair, I saw, when I was last in Scotland; and although it is no doubt very badly painted, it has more subject, and more entertainment in it than any other three pictures I have since produced."

The picture of Pitlessie Fair is in its nature essentially provincial and individual. The scene is depicted, village and stream, exactly as the painter found it, and all the persons in the drama we can safely hold up our right for the identity of in the county court: they are such as are to be met at kirk and market, and their names are in the register book: it is no picture of the fancy, but the portrait of a village with its people; and, as such, it is one of the finest of its kind. But Wilkie did not long continue in this bondage: he stamped on his next great picture one ruling sentiment and one pervading action, and shaped his forms and suited the expression to reflect the mind rather than individuality; he used nature still, but moulded it to his purposes.

The artist for a while did not venture, save to his friends, to call this picture Pitlessie Fair; for it is said that some of the district worthies who figure there

affected displeasure, and that even his father, who is represented standing conversing with a publican, looked grave at this till some one suggested that he seemed in the act of warning the other to keep a decorous house. It is thought — and the sketches of heads which he made from the congregation of Cults support this — that he once contemplated a scene of far broader humour and more obstreporous merriment. Those sketches amount to at least a dozen, and sleep is depicted there, from the first faint dawn of drowsiness to the final and effectual snore. One, evidently a person of substance, strives with all his skill to keep his eyes open, but the lids drop in spite of him, as though they were of lead. A lady, who seems to be his wife, with a round plump face, smooth and trembling in its fat like a new turned out print of jelly, is fairly retired mouth and nose within a rampart of double chin, and the closing twinkle of her small grey eyes, like candles expiring in grease, intimate the enjoyment of a dose. Over the broad face of another worthy drowsiness is silently stealing, like mist over a landscape: he keeps up bravely, and wishes it to be thought devoutly; but a certain twitching about the corners of his mouth, which appears ready to yawn, and an admonitory nip with his finger and thumb which he gives his nose, show that he must, in his turn, submit too to slumber; while another, whom, with the wags of Cults, we shall call the precentor, overcome probably by the vehemence with which he had sung three double verses of a psalm to the tune of Bangor, and lulled by the voice of the preacher, indulges in what he reckons an un-

seen snooze, which seems about to become a gaping snore, fit to infect a whole congregation. The artist, however, avoided the allurements of humour such as this; nor did he, save in one or two groups, stumble into the dirty Dutch path to reputation, and wallow in a mire unworthy of being painted.

The muse has not reckoned Pitlessie Fair unworthy of her thoughts: a poet, as well as scholar, who calls the picture "the earliest, and in all those graphic excellencies by which the pencil of Wilkie has since been distinguished, perhaps the richest of his productions," thus records in numbers one of the many groups of which it is composed: —

> "Loud rolls the drum amidst the rolling mass,
> As through the crowd recruiting parties pass;
> The sergeant stalks, in all the pomp of war,
> His sword and helmet glitt'ring from afar.
> Behind him march, in scarlet bright array'd,
> The plumed victims of his bloody trade.
> In tatter'd doublet, bringing up the rear,
> Comes the recruit, compell'd to volunteer
> By drink or debt: he musters all his train,
> Halts mid the mob, and thus begins his strain: —
> 'Is there a lad whose parents are unkind,
> Or who has found no master to his mind;
> Whose sweetheart has beguil'd him — won his heart —
> Jilted, then left him to endure the smart;
> One lad of spirit, who disdains to toil,
> And sweat, and slave, and turn the sullen soil,
> His be this purse, with twenty shining guineas,
> And his a bowl of punch might float a pinnace.'
> Old Andrew Gammell shakes his scarlet rags
> Full in his face, and waves his beggar bags;
> Cries, 'Bairns, I follow'd twenty years the drum,
> Through fields of glory — then's the aftercome!'"

Old Andrew Gammell, whom the poet, as well as the painter, has introduced, had not yet attained all his

fame: he sat to Sir Walter Scott for his inimitable Edie Ochiltree, and has thus done good service to painting and romance. We may as well add here, that besides the father and grandfather of Sir David, he introduced the portraits of his sister, his sister-in-law, and himself into this picture: they contribute their share of entertainment—their quota of character—and are pointed out by those, and they are now many, who visit this truly admirable production.

While Wilkie was at work on Pitlessie Fair, a present, as unlooked for as welcome, was made to him, which it may be as well to describe in his own words:—"I wrote to you"—he thus writes to a fellow-student in Edinburgh on the 23d of October, 1804—"a fortnight ago, desiring you to send me a glass and case, and a piece of ivory, which are not yet come to hand. The cause of my writing now is to desire you to send me a piece of ivory the same size as the piece of paper enclosed, for painting a miniature on.

"The Reverend Dr. Martin of Monimail has just now made me a very handsome present of two lay-figures which belonged to his brother, the painter, each of them measuring about three feet in height, and having the same proportions as the human figure. They are old, and perhaps not so good now as they have been; but when I began to examine them, I was surprised to find what fine workmanship has been bestowed upon them. Their joints are made of brass, and move upon the same principle and in the same direction each way as the bones of the human body, and instead of skin there is a silk cloth

made to cover the whole body, which stretches and contracts as the limbs move. One is male and the other a female; and I have got some clothes made for them in the low style; and I have begun to try their utility by practice, which I find will be very great indeed in draperies, for I have no more to do but put on what clothes I want, and place the figure in the proper position, in which it will keep without moving as long as I require. I am coming much quicker on with the Fair since I got these figures, for which I cannot enough thank the generosity of Dr. Martin."

This is the description of an artist who evidently sees a lay-figure for the first time, and written, too, to one who was in equal ignorance of the existence of such an auxiliary to study. The Trustees' Academy had casts from the antique, and the students were permitted to paint in oils; but they seem to have been without the help of this moveable piece of mechanism to enable them to adjust the drapery of their groups; nor had they authority to study from the naked figure, without which the students could see no more in their art than other men had seen. Wilkie had now got a lay-figure, which, unlike the herd-boy, would not tire in any posture: he had got dresses, too, made, not in the high cut of foreign art, but in the humble fashion of the husbandmen of Strath-Eden, so that all might be in character. He had also caused an easel to be made, which, unlike the old chest of drawers, allowed his canvass to slide up or down, and could be moved more or less to the light as was required. These are a sample of the difficulties which were in the way of this great artist to fame, in the contending with which

he reckoned that he acquired much of his skill; for it was his opinion, that the student whose road was made smooth by all manner of facilities, never learned his profession thoroughly, and that in overcoming obstacles he was mastering his art.

While he was employed on the picture of Pitlessie Fair, it began to be whispered about the district that the minister's son of Cults, who drew boys' heads at school when he should have learned his lesson, and caricatured the elders of the parish in their own seats in the church, was likely to be distinguished yet in the land. That he who drew a man's foot like a fish, and, in the opinion of the secretary of the Trustees' Academy, was unfitted by nature for a painter, should yet carry away the prize of ten guineas, was hard to be believed, and to some seemed incredible; yet so it was: and then the old sages of the land began to say, "Ay, ay! I aye thought there was something above the common in the boy:" nor did an old dame, who with some passed for a prophetess, hesitate to assert, that, as there was a Sir David Lindsay in poetry, there would be a Sir David Wilkie in painting; and that she would live to see it. We know not that Wilkie was knighted that the old dame's words might be fulfilled; but it is certain her words had circulation, and credence too, in Strath-Eden a round score of years before the sword was laid on his shoulder.

But these honours had yet to be won by well directed study and successful labour—by days of privation and anxiety—and by all the travail which genius has to undergo, before it wins the applause of the world. We have seen that even while he was at

work on his first great picture he was preparing to commence portrait-painter, and that he ordered as much ivory as would enable him to paint two miniatures. One of these was the portrait of a singular Frenchman, from whom he experienced civilities at Crawford Lodge; and who had as fine a marked face, I have heard Wilkie say, as he had a kind heart. Experience in his art was his constant desire: the more he studied, the more he perceived his deficiency: in the Trustees' Academy he never thought himself skilful. The praise of friends (and that was not wanting) never got a better approval than a doubtful shake of the head; and in the happiest of his works he always saw room for improvement, and said he hoped to do better yet. He was ever inquiring into the use and nature of colours, and was so much pleased with a book by Ibbotson on the use of oil colours, that he copied the whole work, which was rather rare at the time, with his pen, and mixing his palettes according to the counsel of the author, communicated that grey leaden hue to some of his early works, which is observable even in The Blind Fiddler.

His portraits painted at this time in Fife are numerous: we shall name but a few. Of miniatures, in addition to the one already mentioned, there is, 1. Mr. Vial; 2. Mr. Moncrieff; 3. John Wilkie; 4. James Wilkie. Of the size of life, he painted, 1. Mr. and Mrs. Beaton of Blebo, with their daughter, on one canvass; 2. Mr. Morison of Naughton, and Miss Beaton of Blebo, on one canvass; 3. Dr. Menzies, of Durie; 4. two of the sons of Mr. Christie, banker in Cupar; 5. Mrs. Graham of Greigston; 6. Dr. Grace

of Cupar. There are many others—paintings, drawings, and sketches—in oil, in chalks, or in lead. A few of them are conversation pieces—a family at a table, sitting round the fire, engaged in devotion or conversing. One of the best of these represents his father and his mother seated, with serene and devout looks, meditating on the sacrament, of which they are to be partakers on the morrow. All these portraits have the merit of being faithful both to form and expression: there is no attempt to flatter; or, in other words, to bring the drawing within the science of the art: truth seems his aim, and what he aims at he accomplishes. But it has been observed of these his early, as it has been of his later portraits, that they want the look and air of the works of regular portrait-painters, and seem to be heads withdrawn from some domestic or historical picture, where they had a part to perform; a difference which some regard as a beauty, others as a blemish. To these works we may add a boy watering a grey horse—long a sign to an ale-house, but now in the collection of Mr. Methven of Cupar, and much admired.

To this period belongs the picture called The Bounty Money, or The Village Recruit*, a subject borrowed from the life; a sight often witnessed during the great French war, when some unsteady lad—crossed with love, or crazed with drink—moved by the drum, took the enlisting shilling from the recruiting sergeant, who assured all listeners that his regiment was the most blackguard corps in the service,

* In the collection of Wynn Ellis, Esq., M. P.

and steady men were sure of preferment, and, mounting the cockade, marched off in quest of glory. There are fellows who look forward to the enlistment of a fresh candidate for glory as a circumstance which may not increase the honour of the army, but will put some loose silver into circulation, and make the pint stoup clatter—in which the sergeant will at least drink his allowance, and the recruit his bounty.

The scene is laid in a country ale-house: two experienced soldiers stand expatiating on the pleasures of an active campaign in a foreign land, where coined gold is to be had for the gathering, and linen is found on every hedge: three rustics are listening with gaping ecstasy to the description—not so the recruit; he is seated on the change-house table, waiting, jug in hand, for the drawing of the cork out of a bottle of ale, which requires all the might of the waiter to extract: the latter shuts his eyes, and sets his teeth to the task; and the former sucks his lips, in unison with the chirking sound of the cork as it comes reluctantly out of the neck of the bottle. An old man sits silently smoking his pipe by the fire. Some of the groups in this picture—now well known through the able graver of Fox—are equal to any after effort of the artist.

The drawings and sketches of earlier times are numerous in Fife; though many, it is said, were destroyed by the artist's orders, when, after his father's death, the family removed to London. 1. A rude sketch in water colours of the beadle of Cults, coming home at evening fall from his labour; his spade is over his shoulder, his dog at his heels, and his wife stands

at his cottage door to receive him. He was little more than eleven when he sketched this. 2. A scene from The Gentle Shepherd, in water colours, drawn when he was at school; in possession of Mrs. Cockburn of Cupar. 3. A shipwreck, sketched in Indian ink: the sea is in high commotion; a dismantled vessel is drifting upon rocks, and a young man on horseback has plunged into the surf, and is rescuing two mariners from drowning. The artist's name is on the drawing. 4. A small portrait of Captain Barclay, on a deal board, and said by tradition to be his first attempt in oil. 5. Portrait of John Anderson, his cousin, painted while at Graham's Academy; it is about eight inches square, on a deal board, and is now a little faded. 6. Portrait of his sister Helen; measures twelve inches by ten, and is on pasteboard. She stands with her hands crossed—"Whether from its style, or the beauty of the girl, I know not," says a gentleman of taste in Fife; "but it is a portrait one is apt to fall in love with." 7. Portrait, unfinished, of his cousin James Anderson; the size of life. When Wilkie visited Cults for the last time, he looked on this portrait and said, "A very good likeness."

Having finished, but not to his mind, Pitlessie Fair, and exhausted, for the present, the sitters of Cults and Cupar, Wilkie began to think of carrying his talents to another market. He looked on Fife and its circle of sea-coast towns with the eye of King James, who called it a shepherd's plaid hemmed round with pearls, and went and set up his easel first, it is said, in Kinghorn, and next in St. Andrews;

nay, he even went as far as Aberdeen: but so little impression had art made on the eastern coast that he found very few sitters; neither could he obtain either colours or brushes—canvass or ivory. He returned quickly and unreluctantly towards the south, and began to think how art followed, rather than led wealth; and that Scotland, much as she loved song, loved it not the less that it was cheap; and was unable from her poverty, rather than her want of sympathy, to indulge in a taste which included the expensive productions of painting and sculpture. He began to feel that, like the seed of a flower dropt in the desert instead of the garden, he could neither thrive nor strike root; and concluded that he must seek the warmth of the south, and forsake the cold of the north.

When he communicated his resolution of going to London to study at the Royal Academy to his father, the minister, it is said, strove to dissuade him; and his mother urged his indifferent health, to which she was afraid the confined air of a great city would be injurious. It was true, his father said, that he had pleased many with his pictures, and that there seemed to him much that was natural and beautiful in the compositions: but in London he would have to strive with established reputations, stand up in competition with masters of the calling; and what hope had he, —a youth who had never drank at the fountains of Roman art, nor seen the works which men were accused of worshipping, so much of divine beauty was in them—to succeed in such an adventure? Though the perils of the way were carefully pointed out, neither

father nor mother forbade him to try it; so, collecting together his studies, sketches, drawings, and pictures—calling in all the money owing to him in the district for portraits, disposing of Pitlessie Fair for the sum of five and twenty pounds to Mr. Kinnear, and bidding farewell to his fellow students in Edinburgh, he sailed in a Leith packet for London, on the 20th of May, 1805, when nineteen years and six months old.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS FIRST LONDON LODGING. — HIS FIRST EXHIBITION. — ENTERS HIS NAME AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY AS A PROBATIONER. — MR. HAYDON'S DESCRIPTION OF HIM AT THIS TIME. — SOMERSET HOUSE EXHIBITION OF 1805. — LETTERS TO MR. MACDONALD AND THE REV. DAVID WILKIE. — EARLY DIFFICULTIES. — WANT OF ENCOURAGEMENT. — MEDITATES RETURNING TO SCOTLAND. — INTRODUCED BY MR. STODART TO THE EARL OF MANSFIELD. — PAINTS AND EXHIBITS "THE VILLAGE POLITICIANS."

WILKIE loved to relate how he thought on the blue and lofty Lomonds as he skirted the low-lying coast of England, and wondered at the clouds of smoke which came rolling towards him, as he sailed up the Thames through masts standing as thick as the trees in the forest. The first step he took was to seek out a convenient room for a study; this he found at No. 8. Norton Street, Portland Road, in the house of a coal-merchant: his second was to seek out some public place where he might display his pictures, to make his works known and attract purchasers; and the third step was to enter his name at the Royal Academy as a probationer. As the classes of the Academy close when the annual exhibition opens, Wilkie was unable to enter upon the studies which he so much desired till the middle of July, but in the meanwhile the merits of his pictures found admirers: people were observed to stop and stare at a shop win-

dow near Charing Cross, where two or three of his works were allowed to hang; nay, some seemed willing to buy, but were deterred by the fear, which most men have when they trust to their own judgment, of buying a matter for ridicule rather than admiration. It is related by a gentleman, now on the judgment-seat in matters of ancient as well as modern painting, that a wealthy friend came to him one morning, and told him he had seen what he thought a very clever little picture for six pounds in a window at Charing Cross, painted by one Wilkie, but that he was afraid to buy it. "Oh, buy it by all means," said the other; "it cannot be altogether bad if you admire it: risk six pounds on your own taste." He returned to the window where he had seen the picture, but it was gone: some one who had trust in his own taste had bought it.*

When the Academy opened, Wilkie, who had gained admission as a probationer by means of a drawing from the Niobe, took his seat with his class. Something of his Edinburgh fame had come before him; Jackson, at that time a student, seems to have seen as well as heard of him, for he wrote to Haydon, then young and ardent, to hasten from Devonshire, for that a tall, pale, thin Scotsman had just come to study at the Academy, who had done something from Macbeth, of which report spoke highly. "Touched with this," said Haydon, "I came at once to London and went to the Academy; Wilkie, the most punctual of mankind, was there before me. We sat and drew in silence for some time: at length Wilkie rose, came and looked over

* I am assured by one who had the means of knowing that The Village Recruit was the picture thus exhibited.

my shoulder, said nothing, and resumed his seat. I rose, went and looked over his shoulder, said nothing, and resumed my seat. We saw enough to satisfy us of each other's skill, and when the class broke up we went and dined together. Wilkie was, as Jackson had described him, tall, pale, and thin, with blue and uncommon bright eyes, a nose rather short, and a mouth full of humour of the quietest and richest kind."

The acquaintance thus begun ripened, I may say, into friendship: it is true they had frequent disputes in art. Haydon, an admirer of the grand style, whose first word was Raphael, and his second Michael Angelo, was unwilling to admire merit of a lower order, and rather than be less, chose not to be at all: while Wilkie, with a wider reach of mind and a less exclusive taste, saw much to admire in works of humbler fame, and contended that though the rose excelled in beauty all other flowers of the field, we were not to despise the daisy, which had a loveliness all its own. These little bickerings, in which the quick and lively spirit of the Englishman gave him, with those who did not think deeply, some advantage over the slow and deliberate Scot, were never carried beyond the limits of courtesy; and though the former, among his smarter associates, reckoned the latter, with his slow speech and less ready mind, something tedious, they esteemed each other's talents, and maintained a sort of friendship which resembled an armed neutrality. "Wilkie, who was always hospitable in his nature," said Haydon, "invited me one morning to breakfast, soon after his arrival in London. I went accordingly to 8. Norton Street, knocked at the door of his apart-

ments: a voice called 'Come in!' I opened the door, and found, instead of the breakfast which I expected, the painter sitting partly naked, and drawing from his left knee for a figure which he had on his easel. He was not at all moved, for naught moved Wilkie; and when I expressed some surprise at what he was about, he replied, with a smile, 'It's capital practice, let me tell you.'" Of these early days of study, Wilkie thus writes to a friend in the North: —

Dear Sir,

I am still attending the Royal Academy, which I make a point of doing from morning till night: at present, as I understand, there is to be no Academy all the month of September. I have got acquainted with some of the students, who seem to know a good deal of the cant of criticism, and are very seldom disposed to allow any thing merit that is not two hundred years old.

I have seen a great many very fine pictures of the old school, which have given me a taste very different from that which I had when I left Edinburgh, and I am convinced now that no picture can possess real merit unless it is a just representation of nature. I have not seen any of Barry's pictures yet, though by all accounts he must be a wonderful man. Peter Pindar says he is the first painter of the English school.

D. W.

Reynolds, on all occasions, expressed great dislike for talking artists; nor were they much relished by

Wilkie. "Let us be doing something," was his oblique mode of rebuking the loquacious, and admonishing the idle. The cant of criticism, of which he complains, he found strong among the smart, pert, self-sufficient students of the Royal Academy. Of the merits of some of the leading academicians he thus writes to his fellow-student MacDonald on the 15th of July, 1805:—

"You will, perhaps, have been expecting that I should have written you sooner, but I thought proper to wait till I should be admitted into the Royal Academy, and then I would give you all I had to say at once. The Academy was not opened till Monday last. I have been here for upwards of six weeks, and during all that time I have been spending money to no purpose. I need not be very particular in recounting every occurrence that has happened since I left you; let it suffice that I landed here safe on the Friday after I saw you, and here I am still. Amongst the first things that I did after landing here, I went to see the Exhibition at Somerset House, with which I was very much amused: there were pictures of all descriptions, some good and some bad; but I understand this year's Exhibition, comparatively, was a very poor one, which always will be considered so when the principal pictures are portraits. Opie, Hoppner, and Lawrence seem to be the principal painters in that line; though Opie gives great force, yet he surely is a dirty painter. The only great historical picture in it, and the one that attracted most notice, was a picture by West, of 'Thetis bring-

ing armour to Achilles,' which was certainly a very grand design, but I did not like it as well as some others of Mr. West's that I have seen since. There was 'a Boy and an Ass' by Allan, in one of the rooms, which I believe you must have seen before he left Scotland. I think Allan might have done it better. He has made dark narrow shadows and hard reflected lights, which I don't at all like; but he says that that is the way that Opie produces such effects. Allan is now gone to try his fortune at St. Petersburgh, and sailed from this about a fortnight ago. This is certainly a bold adventure; but he was determined to go abroad somewhere or other, and I hope he may succeed.

"Since I came to town, I have conversed with some of the first artists in the kingdom: I have been introduced to Flaxman, Nollekens, Fuseli, and West. Mr. Flaxman is the best modeller we have. I was introduced to him by a letter that I brought with me from Scotland; and he introduced me to Mr. Fuseli, who is the professor of painting in the Academy, and a very kind good sort of man he is. He questioned me about our artists in Edinburgh—inquired if Graham painted any. He had heard of the fame of Raeburn; he admired the works of the celebrated Runciman, and asked if I had ever seen his Ossian's Hall at Pennycuick: he also inquired about David Allan, and, for all his bad drawing, allowed him a very considerable degree of merit. A friend of mine, who is a very great connoisseur, took me to Mr. West's house, where we found that celebrated artist engaged in painting a picture; but how much was I

astonished at his wonderful works, which, for grandeur of design, clearness of colouring, and correct outline, surpass any modern pictures I have yet seen: his figures have, no doubt, a flatness about them, but, with all his faults, we have not a painter that can draw like him.

"I have been seeing a gallery of pictures by Morland, which please me very much indeed. He seems to have copied nature in every thing, and in a manner peculiar to himself. When you look at his pictures you see in them the very same figures that we see here every day in the streets, which, from the variety and looseness in their dress, form an appearance that is truly picturesque, and much superior to our peasantry in Scotland. I have also seen some pictures by Teniers, which for clear touching certainly go to the height of human perfection in art: they make all other pictures look misty beside them. As for Turner, whom you have heard Allan speak of, I do not at all understand his method of painting: his designs are grand, the effect and colouring natural, but his manner of handling is not to my taste; and although his pictures are not large, you must see them from the other end of the room before they can satisfy the eye.

"I must now conclude with telling you that I like this place very well, and that I will remain here as long as I can. I am admitted as a probationer into the Royal Academy, which I attend from 11 till 2 o'clock, and from 5 till 7. I live about a mile and a half from it, which is a good long walk twice a day.

"D. W."

Of his way of living in London he thus writes to his brother Captain James Wilkie. The picture is curious.

Dear Brother,

I am now come to like this place extremely well, for I have every thing here I can wish for, and, although I live at a much greater expense than I did in Edinburgh, yet I also find that I live much better. I breakfast at home, and dine at an ordinary, a place where about a dozen gentlemen meet at 2 o'clock, and have a dinner served up that only costs them 13*d.* a head, which I am sure is as cheap as any person can have such a dinner in any part of Great Britain: besides, we have the advantage of hearing all the languages of Europe talked with the greatest fluency, the place being mostly frequented by foreigners: indeed, it is a very rare thing to see an Englishman; while there are Corsicans, Italians, French, Germans, Welsh, and Scotch.

I have formed a good number of acquaintances in this place; among the rest Mr. Marshall from Perth, who was formerly acquainted with you when you were in that place.

D. W.

The house where he dined was in Poland Street, and was kept by a man of the name of Charles. The French mode of cooking which prevailed there, with its soups and stews, suited a Scottish taste better than the heavier roast and boiled of English cookery: nor was the comparative moderation of the charges unac-

ceptable to a student who came of no wealthy race, and was resolved to live within his means. He had other reasons for dining there: to Haydon, who sometimes accompanied him, he pointed out an old visitor, who, when his scanty meal was finished, seized a newspaper, and gave his whole heart so much to the perusal, that he was lost to all the din of conversation and controversy which sometimes raged around him. He is one of the persons in the drama of The Village Politicians. Of the early friends whom he found in London he thus writes to his relative, John Anderson: —

My dear Friend,

I have now been upwards of three months in London, and have been most of that time attending the Royal Academy. I am not yet admitted as a regular student, but have all the privileges that a regular student has; and as I am here for the sole purpose of attending it, I make it my duty to do so from morning till night. Since I came to town I have had frequent opportunities of experiencing the goodness of your friend John Wilkie, who (although I had no other introduction to him than inquiring for you) has been one of the greatest friends I have had since I came to town. While his brother Robert was here he took me to a great many public places with him; and he has not only made me a welcome guest at his own house, but has also introduced me to another family of the same name, with whom I am also on very intimate terms. I find myself very happy and comfortable in this place, and have now

found out the cheapest and most proper ways of living. Though I live at double the expense here that I did in Edinburgh, yet I find I live much better.

I am at present uncertain how long I may remain in London; the truth is I can stay no longer here than my money lasts, and I have no opportunity of increasing it by portrait painting, as my time is wholly taken up in study; therefore the probability is that I will be obliged to return to Scotland by the end of October, and fall to my old trade. If your ship remains long in Yarmouth Roads I hope you will write to me often.

D. W.

The indifferent success of his letters of recommendation suggested to him, when the pencil of domestic manners became successful in his hand, The Letter of Introduction, in which a somewhat soft and modest country lad presents himself to a cold and suspicious citizen. He thus writes, in September 1805, to James Anderson: —

My dear Friend,

During the short time I have been in town I have seen a great deal, and met with some very strange characters. On my first arrival I boarded myself in a house where there was scolding from morning till night, which was the greatest entertainment to me for some time that could be; and many a broad hint did I get from the landlady of my bad behaviour in laughing at their quarrels, which, however,

I at last grew tired of, and left the house. Ever since I have stayed at a decent house in the west end of the town, where I find myself very happy and comfortable, and in every respect I live well, though at a great expense.

I got admitted into the Royal Academy as soon as it was opened, and have attended very closely ever since. I have got acquainted with some families here, which we consider as a matter of importance, as it is by that means alone we can be introduced to company.

I have found the letters of recommendation that I brought of less weight than I might have expected. I had three from Mr. Lister, one to Mr. Mundell, who received me with a great deal of politeness; another to Messrs. Paxton and Cockerell, on whom I called a great number of times and never found in; and the third was to D. Miles, on whom I also called two or three times, and did not find him, and I have never called on him since, for he happens to stay about ten miles' distance from me. This is the reason why I have not written to Mr. Lister, for I could give him no good account of the letters he gave me.

D. W.

The love of his family followed Wilkie to London: though distant, the arm of affection was still around him. In other days there was a certain scriptural simplicity of intercourse between man and man which prevailed in the North. This is visible in all the letters addressed by the minister of Cults to his son.

He maintains the simplicity of the early Presbyterian, and says in the beginning, instead of "Dear Son," simply "David." He is alike anxious about his health and his studies. "We are well pleased," he writes, "to hear that you have got a room to your mind in the west end of the city: be careful to attend to your diet, and do not fatigue yourself too much by either walking or work. You have, no doubt, seen much in your art already; and it is proper that you should be introduced to as many respectable characters as you can. I need not desire you to be careful of your expense. We sent Mr. Kinnear's picture (Pitlessie Fair) to Kinloch last night."

To his father he writes (September 6. 1805):—

Dear Father,

I received with a great deal of pleasure the letter which you sent me from my brother John; in which he requests me to call on a Mr. Woolley, at the India House, who has a son in India in the same battalion with himself, and who he is sure will be of great service to me; but he does not consider that it is not an easy matter here to get introduced to a person I never saw before, without having some written credential certifying that I am the person I pretend to be; but this he has forgot to send me.

I was calling on Mr. Stodart the other day, and I inquired of him if he had any small piano-fortes by him, which he said he sometimes had, and that he could get second-hand ones so low as eight or ten pounds; but these he could not recommend: however,

if I chose to go the length of twenty pounds, I might get a very good second-hand one, with additional keys. But he thought we should rather go the length of a new one, which, although they do not make them themselves, he could get one from another maker for twenty-three pounds, which would cost us in a shop thirty pounds; but if it was known that Helen was to have an instrument of that value, it might excite envy through the whole country-side.

D. W.

One of our critics, who had some reason to reflect on fortune, says that a statue should be erected to the honour of Chance, for to accident, rather than well-laid schemes, most men owe their success in life. This is but true in part: to the stupid and the dull the brightest opening offers itself in vain, while by a mind prepared to take advantage of this tide in the affairs of men, which at one time or other flows to all, the golden opportunity is seized, and honour and fame follow. To this accidental visit of Wilkie to Stodart, we may impute his almost immediate ascent in art and reputation. The piano-forte maker happened to be married to a Wilkie; had some taste for painting, as well as music; and, in the way of his business, was acquainted with the Countess of Mansfield, and her son the earl. "I now begin to feel myself quite at home in London," Wilkie thus writes to his brother the captain. "I have got into the humours and customs of the place, and become acquainted with many families of consequence. There is

a Mr. Stodart here whom I am acquainted with, who is grand piano-forte maker to the royal family: he is married to a sister of Mr. Wilkie of Bonnington: he is at present sitting to me for his portrait. I have thoughts of staying here all winter, as I think it will be of great advantage to me; however, that is very uncertain, as I cannot remain here long unless I can get into some work in the portrait way, which I have now some hopes of." He writes in a similar strain to his father in a letter, dated October 1. 1805:—

Dear Father,

I received the letter you sent me by Mr. John Campbell*, with a small miniature, &c. I have been a little uneasy almost ever since I came to London about having nothing to do that might turn to account; for although I had plenty of introductory letters, yet nobody ever expressed the least desire of seeing any of my pictures, or of sitting for their portraits: however, the dawn of encouragement has at last unexpectedly begun to appear, and I have now some faint hopes of getting into employment, not unlike that with which I was so much favoured in Fife. The person I have to thank for this is my friend Mr. Stodart, who, coming one day to see my pictures, offered to sit for his portrait; which I have finished with some degree of success, and he has promised to use his influence in my favour among his friends, who, I hope, will follow his example; for I have experienced before that such a thing as that needs but

* Now Lord Campbell, and nephew to the beautiful Mary Campbell, the first Mrs. Wilkie.

a beginning. If this should take place, I will probably stay in town all winter, which I am persuaded will be very much to my advantage. Mr. Stodart has taken a fancy to two pictures I am doing at present, which, he says, he will purchase upon certain terms; so that you may tell Helen there are some hopes of her getting a piano-forte still.

Agreeable to my brother John's desire I went to the India House, and found Mr. Woolley, who gave me a very kind reception; and instead of my being obliged to explain to him the circumstance of my brother's acquaintance with his son, it appeared that he knew more of my brother than I did, and told me every thing about his late promotion.

My brother James expects to get here about the end of this month, and he wants me to go with him to Scotland, which I will be obliged to do if my present expectations do not succeed.

D. W.

His sister Helen heard with the joy of one who has a natural taste for music, that the chance of obtaining a piano-forte had become something like certain, and his father heard of his intention of remaining during the winter in London, with the anxiety natural to one who loved independence, and had a dread of debt. "As you mention your wish," says this most worthy and simple man, "to continue in London during the most part of winter, and have some hopes of success in your line, I have had it in my mind for some time of applying to Lord Crawford for the loan of a few pounds—fifteen or twenty,—which, if he

lends, I would transmit to you, in case you found that such assistance was necessary to continue you in London for a certain time; and the money might be repaid after your return to Scotland. Dr. Hill, at the Synod, on Tuesday last was inquiring very kindly for you, and is highly pleased with the picture you drew of his son." The letter of Wilkie in answer to this lifts up the veil from his situation a little: he has spent sixty-two pounds of the seventy which he brought from home with him; and though he believes Lord Crawford a better man than most to be indebted to, he thinks that he has spent enough of Scotland's money in England already. The date is October 21.

Dear Father,

It was with some degree of impatience that I waited the arrival of your last, which is now come to hand. I am still in the hopes of employment sufficient to enable me to live. Mr. Stodart has procured me the promise of some of his friends to sit for their portraits, with which, and what other things I can get to do, I will try and gain the means of subsistence. As to your intention of borrowing money for me from Lord Crawford, I would not like that so well if I can avoid it: although he might be a better man to be indebted to than any other, yet I would have recourse to that remedy only in the last extreme, for I think I have spent enough of my own country's money here already: however, in case it should be necessary I will let you know; in the meantime I have still eight pounds remaining, which will allow me time to think about it. You may tell

Helen that I am afraid she will not get her pianoforte so soon as she expects, for I must be first able to keep myself before I can send her such a present, and I hope, in the meantime, she will apply herself to music and every thing else, when she goes to the boarding-school.

I have met with some of my old acquaintances who studied with me at Graham's Academy, who I find of some use. One, in particular, has introduced me to some of his relatives, and other persons of respectability. My old friend MacDonald the engraver in Edinburgh, with whom I used to correspond formerly, is also come to town lately to push his fortune.

Amongst the many ways by which we try here to save expense is that of cleaning our own boots and shoes; for you must know that the people of the house will not clean them, and when they send them out to the shoe-blacks in the street they become expensive. To remedy this I have got both blacking and brushes, and clean them every morning myself. You may tell Nanny and Jean that I can now show them how to make the shoes shine.

I have begun to attend the Class for Perspective, and I will also attend the Lectures on Anatomy, Painting, &c., as they come in course: I have not got my ticket as a student yet.

D. W.

The health of Wilkie, at no period very strong, seems to have about this time alarmed his friends, but the "pale, thin" student studied on. He maintained brief disputes with Haydon and others upon the merits

of the historic style at the Academy, and when wearied with controversy, which neither convinced nor converted any one, would cry, "Lads, let's be doing!" nay, now and then he wrote letters like the following to his friends, in which he allowed some of his humours to escape:—

My dear Friend,

I was favoured with yours of the 18th, which I am the more encouraged to answer, from the pleasure I know you will have in hearing of such adventures as a person may meet with in such a place as London, which, although you have heard it often before, is really a wonderful city. Here, if you have money, you may do anything; and nobody will make the least inquiry, or trouble their heads about what you are doing. I have acquired a good stock of impudence, which I find is of great advantage; for if we can't speak for ourselves nobody else will. I have now had an opportunity of seeing the English ladies, who, I find, differ materially from the Scotch: unless we walk arm in arm on the street, and show them all complacency, and keep continually talking, we are considered as insignificant sort of fellows. However, I have got quite up to all this, and can manage extremely well. You may tell George Veitch that I am grown so much the man of gallantry, that the ladies I meet on the way at night often fall in love with me, and very often entreat me to walk home with them, although I never saw them before. You may also tell him, that I frequently get into the theatres of Drury Lane and Covent Garden for the small sum of

a sixpence, which, if he will please to recollect, is much cheaper than he and I used to go to the theatre in Edinburgh.

I am at present in hopes of getting into some employment in the portrait line; at any rate I will try and make all the shifts I can to keep myself here, for it is too soon to return to Scotland yet.

D. W.

In December, Wilkie, hitherto a probationer, was admitted a student of the Academy. He had, as he informs us, enjoyed all a student's privileges before; but, as the rules require a three months' study, as well as a successful drawing of an anatomical figure, with the muscles marked and numbered, and of an antique statue also, in which true drawing and just proportions are found, he could not, as a matter of form, take a place among the students. It was necessary that he should make another set of drawings before he could study from the male and female living models, and to this continuous task he set himself with his usual calm enthusiasm. Meanwhile he availed himself of the advantages, and they are many and valuable, which the Academy affords to students. He attended the weekly lectures on anatomy and perspective; took sittings, when he could obtain them, for portraits; and during hours of intermission, made studies and sketches for a series of domestic pictures then dawning on his fancy. In one of his letters home, dated December 1st, he says, "I am going on pretty well in my professional employment, in which I get a good deal of encouragement: my lodging is often visited

by people of respectability, and my friends and acquaintances here are now become as numerous as they were in Edinburgh." Though his prospects brightened up a little, still his hope of success lay in painting portraits. He thus writes to his father on the 5th of January, 1806:—

"I am now become quite inured to the difficulties of living in London; for I have been several times reduced within the bounds of the last half guinea, and have been under the necessity of living upon credit. However, I have still as yet cleared my way and kept out of the pawnbroker's, although at one time I was on the brink of writing to you for a supply, as I was rather harassed about insuring from the militia. I have now, however, reason to be thankful that I have partly got over all these difficulties, and have now the prospect of getting more extensive employment in the portrait way; and if that should fail, I have now found a very ready market for my other paintings, which necessity made me find out. I request, when you write me again, you will send me an extract from the Session Book of my exact age, in case I shall need it for the militia business.

"My prospects at present are very much improved, through the means of my two friends the Stodarts, who have introduced me to two families of quality. The Countess of Mansfield happening to see the Pitlessie Market at their house one day, desired that it might be sent home with her to show some gentlemen: the consequence was, that I was sent for the next day, and was received very kindly by her ladyship, who

professed a great desire of getting me introduced to notice.

"D. W."

Among those "people of respectability" whom the rising fame of the painter attracted, was the now eminent physician Dr. Darling, then a young man, and on his way to India. "I first saw Wilkie," he said, "in April, 1806. Captain Ramage, then sitting to him for his portrait, was with me. On the walls of his little studio I saw various sketches, a few portraits, and some finished pictures of a Scottish character: among the latter was Pitlessie Fair, which he had sent for from Fife, to give it the benefit of his increasing skill. I was struck with the truth and force of character stamped on all he had done; the original and enlivened air of his compositions, and the remarkable brightness of his colouring,—brighter then than afterwards for a time, though it regained its lustre. The Village Politicians was on his easel; he was painting it for Lord Mansfield. The fame of that fine picture followed me to India. I must not omit to say that the calm, and modest, and self-possessed air of the artist was not less remarkable than his talents." At this time he resolved, as he wrote to his brother John in Bengal, to remain six months longer in London, and then return to Scotland. The pretty round sum he brought with him, he said, did not last long, and he was subsisting as well as he could by the painting of portraits. His father's health, too, began to fail; and, lest he should alarm his parents, he brightened his own prospects in his letters home;

yet he was obliged to request ten pounds from the Manse, to enable him to pursue his plan of study with profit. In February we find him attending the anatomical class of Charles Bell, from Edinburgh, "who delivers a course of lectures," says Wilkie, "merely for the use of painters, which I am convinced will be of great service to me." All his hopes he was ever ready to communicate to his father. He writes thus in February:—

Dear Father,

I received your letter of January 25. I am sorry to hear your indisposition has not left you, though from its being abated you may have reason to hope that it will go away altogether.

I think I mentioned to you in my last that I had been taken notice of by the Dowager Countess of Mansfield; since which I had the honour of a call from her son, the present Earl of Mansfield. He seemed to admire the Pitlessie Market very much, and desired me to send it to his house to show to his lady, which I did. I have since, by his means, got a sight of one of the first collections of pictures in town, and he has given me directions to paint a picture for him. This acquaintance has been formed without solicitation or recommendation on my part, although I may reap as great advantage from it, being entirely voluntary.

D. W.

The influence of the friendly Stodart now began to be visible in the fortunes of Wilkie. The Earl of

Mansfield no sooner saw Pitlessie Fair than he felt its beauty as a composition, and had enough of old Scotland in him to perceive that it was as true to the people as the sun is to summer: he sought out the painter in his obscure abode, where he found him with all his pictures and studies around him. When Wilkie hung up a small picture or two in the window at Charing Cross, he put the very modest price of six guineas each on them; but he had now discovered that it was cheaper to study in the Manse of Cults than in the middle of London; and that living models, rich colours, and respectable lodgings—all necessary matters in a polite art—devoured his substance. He had all this in his mind, when the Earl inquired what his price would be for painting him a picture from his study of The Village Politicians. The artist answered fifteen guineas, to which the Earl made no answer; and Wilkie, who seems to have felt that his strength lay in that direction, proceeded to paint the picture, as he said, at a venture. As it approached completion, the rumour ran that it was a work of great genius, and likely to create a change in art. It chanced one day that Sir George Beaumont and Lord Mulgrave were praising the Dutch school, when Jackson, who was present, said if they would come with him, he would find them a young Scotsman who was second to no Dutchman that ever bore a palette on his thumb. "We must go and see this Scottish wonder, Jackson," said Sir George; and they followed him to Wilkie's abode, where they found The Village Politicians all but finished. Two such judges could not but see its worth at once; and, as they had generosity

as well as good judgment, they spread the fame of the picture round the bright circles to which they belonged. They were not only pleased with the works of the artist, but charmed with the simplicity of the man; and being both good judges, and the former a landscape painter of eminence, saw that he was above the common mark—a decided original, in short; and one, too, who found his subjects in the domestic circles of his native land. They did not leave his studio without commissioning a picture each: the price of the one for Sir George Beaumont was fixed at fifty guineas. These commissions, which opened the doors of the temple of Fame to Wilkie, seem to have uplifted him little. He foresaw that the cost of execution would, at the rate which he wrought, and his consequent outlay, far exceed the money they would bring: he felt, too, that his health was failing, and the last guinea ready to leave his pocket; nor did he fail to feel that in portrait, where his hope of subsistence lay, other artists, with their smooth and elegant flattery of pencil, carried away the chief sitters and the high prices. Yet in his letters of that time, when fame and fortune were in the balance, little of hope or of fear is expressed. He thus addresses his relative Anderson:—

TO JAMES ANDERSON.

I was sorry to hear from my father that your hopes of getting out now were very faint, and that you were afraid of not getting an appointment till you were past the age; but I was very much asto-

nished to hear that you had now turned your views to a post in the militia, which is a situation I would have considered as unworthy your acceptance. You have forsaken the most lucrative profession in the world for an employment equally dependent and uncertain, which, like the gaudy butterfly of a summer day, only exists while the sun shines. I am afraid my brother has put this into your head; but you ought rather to avoid the rock on which he himself has split, than follow him as the beacon of your course. I hope my friendship for you will excuse the liberty I take; and if I may be allowed to give my advice, I would advise you, in case you do not go to India, to come to London: for here, if you have interest to get into some counting-house, you may, with a moderate degree of perseverance and attention, get forward pretty well; and I have no doubt but you would like London as well as you did Edinburgh. For my part, I like it a great deal better; for the people are much more affable and free, and my circle of acquaintance is much more extensive here than ever it was in Edinburgh.

D. W.

He is silent, too, about his health in the following letter to a friend of the same date:—

"I have remained much longer in London than I expected. I happened by accident to get a few portraits to do, which has enabled me to obtain a scanty subsistence; and in the meantime I have been attending as much as I can at the Academy, where I am now admitted as a student. I have got acquainted

with some of the students, who, for perseverance and assiduity, show me an example worthy of imitation. I have accordingly got introduced to some people of high rank, who, I hope, will be of service to me hereafter. The longer I have been in London I like it so much the better; and I have already formed a number of agreeable acquaintances, with whom I find myself very happy."

In a similar tone he writes to his brother Thomas in Leith. He now perceives that he had received a very imperfect education in art in the Edinburgh Academy—"spent much of his time in a manner doing nothing;" and that London was the fountain head of art as well as of commerce, to which, notwithstanding its vast expanse, all who hoped for wealth or distinction should repair.

Dear Brother,

I have been now upwards of nine months in London, during which time I have been constantly employed in studying the theory and practice of my profession. From the example of my fellow-students, I have now become more than ever economical of my time; and I even regret that I have spent so much of my time in Scotland in a manner doing nothing. I now find that if a person will devote his mind entirely to the duties of his professional employment, it becomes so habitual to him that he may conceive a pleasure in it superior to any other pastime or amusement.

I am at present doing the best I can to support myself by painting portraits; but living here is at

least double what it is in Edinburgh. Since I came to London, which is not near a twelvemonth, I have spent near 100*l.*; yet, after all, there is no town I ever was in I liked better, for here everybody lives well. And I often think that you yourself at some future period should try your fortune in London; for here you could learn a great number of things you can never learn anywhere else; and you might here attain a knowledge of the trade and commerce that is carried on in the first market in the world, which would be like studying commerce at the fountain head.

D. W.

With The Village Politicians on his easel, and pictures bespoke by noblemen and gentlemen of the first taste and consideration, the young artist, who looked at the future as well as at the present, felt, though his prospects might be called splendid, that they promised fame, but not fortune. Pictures at fifty guineas each, to a hand which, yet untutored in art, moved so slow that a twelvemonth of study and labour was required to complete one, might bring salt to his meat, but not meat to his salt. Added to this, he was all the while contending with that ill-matched pair, poverty and sickness. Of his state of health he says nothing to his friends, conceals his ill-health from his parents, and tries to dazzle them with golden prospects.

"Dear Father, I have been very undecided," he writes home on the 15th of April, 1806, "for this long time

whether I should return to Scotland or not; but I have now come to a resolution of remaining in London. I have painted a good many portraits since I came here; but in that I have been very unsuccessful, for I have not been able to keep myself, and am at present twenty pounds in debt.

"I would from this circumstance not have hesitated a moment in returning to Scotland; but I have at present such golden prospects spread before me, that I cannot resist the temptation of remaining still in London. I have been of late painting a picture for the Earl of Mansfield, to be exhibited in the Royal Academy, which has attracted considerable attention among my friends and acquaintances, and even drawn noblemen to my lodgings; one of whom is a gentleman that acted a considerable part in the late administration, viz. Lord Mulgrave, who seemed so much pleased with it that not only he, but a friend of his, Sir George Beaumont, have engaged me to paint two such pictures for them.

"D. W."

This letter, and perhaps some intimation of his state of health, induced his father to write, desiring, nay all but commanding, his return to Scotland as soon as he had finished the pictures for Sir George Beaumont and Lord Mulgrave. "In the Manse you will find," said his affectionate parent, "a home whilst I am afoot; and for three or four months I am sure you will find as much encouragement as may enable you to return once more to London. Should you continue where you are, we are alarmed about

your support; you know that in the course of these last eleven months, besides the twenty pounds you mention, you have received fifty-five pounds from Scotland. Now as this resource must fail for the time to come, we suspect, if you come not home, that all you can gain by drawing will be insufficient for your maintenance. At the same time I allow that your outlay may be lessened in future, and that the noblemen whom you name and others may, by encouraging, serve you effectually. But here, once for all, I warn you not to put your faith too much in Hope, which, rainbow-like, eludes our grasp, and glitters but to deceive our eyes. If, upon a fair comparison betwixt your monthly labours and expense, you find the balance against you, hesitate no longer, but come home; and this too I recommend for the sake of your health, lest by redoubling your diligence, as you propose, you should hurt your constitution. Besides, it was certainly your design when you left us, after improving yourself in the Royal Academy, to return to Scotland and enjoy the encouragement which was held out to you. I have been and am still distressed by a sounding in my head and a great defect in hearing; your mother, too, is still ailing very much."

Wilkie was much affected by this letter.

"I have considered, dear Father," he says in answer, "all your arguments for returning to Scotland; the most powerful of which is the weak state of health which you say my mother and you at present enjoy. As to my being able to keep myself here, I am not so

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much afraid of that now, as I have the offer of as much work as will keep me for a twelvemonth. Since I came to London I have spent upwards of one hundred pounds, the half of which came from Scotland; but you must know while I was living on it I was doing nothing else but studying at the Academy, and I did not begin to paint for myself till that was done; since which I have had but very little encouragement in the portrait way, which has almost disgusted me at it. You know I was obliged to borrow twenty pounds; but that, I expect, will be nearly paid by the price of the Pitlessie Fair: at all events I am determined to borrow no more. When I was in Scotland I considered that every thing depended on my success in London; for this is the place of encouragement for people of our profession, and if we fail here we never can be great any where; and as I have met with some of the first men in the kingdom who are willing to encourage and assist me, I think it is my interest to try and realise their expectations in me.

"However strong these arguments may be, they are not sufficient to apologise for not coming to Scotland. You will no doubt feel it rather hard being deserted by us all at the time you most need us; more particularly by me, who have been all along in your house in the days of your prosperity, and now, when adversity comes, I am found at a distance.

"I cannot fix at present on any particular time when I shall come to Scotland, as I have so many commissions on hand, and as I will not get my picture out of the Exhibition till June; but I will try and come for a month or two before the winter. But, even

then, I am afraid it will only be a visit; for I must do every thing I can to keep hold of the footing I have gained here.

"I am invited by Lord Mulgrave to spend part of the summer with him at his country-seat in Yorkshire, but of that I must consider hereafter.

"D. W."

Wilkie, when he wrote this letter, had finished his picture of The Village Politicians, placed it in the Royal Academy exhibition, and resolved to abide in London and witness its effect on the public, to whom he submitted it in mingled hope and fear. It had, while on his easel, received the most rapturous praises of some of his fellow-students; among whom Haydon vowed, some say swore, that in dramatic force it rivalled all but Raphael. Less enthusiastic minds saw merit of no common order in it; and all admired the excellence of the grouping, the dramatic skill of the story, and the wondrous force and variety of character in the chief heads. There was a daily crush to see it: crowd succeeded crowd of gazers and wonderers from morning till night. The effect of all this on the placid mind of the artist himself was not unnoted. He was silent amid all the praises showered upon him by the press and by the people; and his only return for flattery, of which few were sparing, was a faint smile, and a customary shake of the head. His native Fife echoed his praises through all her maritime and inland towns; but no praise was so welcome as that of his venerable father. "The accounts in the public prints," observes the minister of

Cults, "of the approbation bestowed on your picture in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy has given us great pleasure. Of these I have received about eight in the London and Edinburgh papers. John Wilkie in London sent me one; Mr. Methven of Cupar brought me two; Mr. Low of Anfield one; Mr. Kinnear one; Colonel Wemyss one; and Mr. Vial two. There is one in the Edinburgh Advertiser which I have not seen. But the most expressive is in a letter from Mr. John Campbell*, of the Inner Temple, to his father in Cupar, which concludes with observing that Mr. Wilkie's picture in the Exhibition is certainly worth several hundred guineas, some say a thousand. You cannot imagine how great a fervour of admiration these accounts have produced in your favour in this quarter of the country; in particular, the gentlemen for whom you painted pictures last year affirm that each of them is worth an hundred guineas. In a card which I have had from Mr. Kinnear, he is particularly anxious that you should write to him, and give him an account of your doings. Mr. Vial also desires to be remembered to you, and wishes to know what those noble admirers offer you for your picture. As to your return to Scotland, if attention to your mother and me be your principal motive, that need no longer influence you: we must not interpose between our son and his success, but endure the accidents of life in the best manner we can; yet we confess it would be more than agreeable to see you again in health and spirits. The subject

* Now Lord Campbell.

of your picture must be regarded as a fortunate one: political disputes and cabals are still popular in our villages among the lower classes."

Next to the admiration lavished upon this picture, the desire was to know what reward the pencil received for what was considered next to a marvel. Much as the praise was which The Village Politicians brought to the artist, the settlement of the price brought an equal amount of pain. I have related how the Earl of Mansfield, when he visited the humble studio of the painter, inquired what his price would be for expanding and painting in oil the study of this picture,—that Wilkie replied, "Fifteen guineas;" to which the Earl made no answer; and that the work (a favourite one with the artist) was executed at a venture. This, it is said, reached Lord Mansfield, who paid Wilkie a visit. It would appear, from the correspondence which soon afterwards ensued, that the price had been a matter of conversation, if not of debate, between them. The picture was in the Exhibition, and the island ringing from side to side in its praises, before this was settled, as the following letter from the Earl sufficiently proves:—

TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ.

Sir, Portland Place, May 9. 1806.

I this morning received your letter informing me that you had been offered thirty guineas for your picture of The Village Politicians. I beg leave to remind you that that picture was painted for me, expressly

at my desire; that while it was yet unfinished you informed me that the price was fifteen guineas, frame excluded; and that in answer I mentioned that I did not object to the price, but advised you to consult Mr. Smith, or other artists of eminence, as to the charges which you ought to make; conceiving, as I then told you, that the only chance a young artist has is to affix a very moderate price to his pictures till he is well known; and this, from the absurd fashion which prevails of paying large sums for very indifferent portraits, instead of purchasing superior pictures of another description at a fair rate. I therefore conceive that the picture is mine, and at *the price of fifteen guineas;* and upon this I am the more tempted to insist, from the conviction that it will be advantageous to you to have it in your power to say, that notwithstanding the success of your picture, and the offers which were made to you, you adhered to your original engagement. I hope you will see this subject in a proper point of view, and in so doing you will (believe me) consult your *present* as well as future advantage.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient humble Servant,
MANSFIELD.

To this Wilkie, who neither painted nor wrote in a hurry, returned the following answer:—

TO THE EARL OF MANSFIELD.

My Lord, 11. Norton Street, May 13. 1806.

I had the honour of your Lordship's letter of the 9th instant, and must apologise for my delay in answering it, as the subject required some consideration.

You remind me that I stated the price of the picture to be fifteen guineas; but I beg leave humbly to observe, that it was not acceded to by your Lordship; and, as you state in your letter, you desired me to consult some artists as to the charge I ought to make. This I have done: I have consulted artists of the first eminence, with a view to be directed by their judgment, as your Lordship did not, in any terms whatever, agree to the price that I myself had put upon the picture.

The artists with whom I have consulted considered thirty guineas as but a very moderate price for the picture. If your Lordship is not satisfied with their judgment, I am willing to refer it to the arbitration of any three Royal Academicians your Lordship shall please to name.

I have the honour to be, very respectfully,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,
D. W.

This brought the Earl to Norton Street; the interview was characteristic: they were both firm, and calm, and courteous men. The Earl, it is said, reminded the artist, that when he desired him to paint

the picture, his merits were unknown, or, at most, but in the dawn, and that he hazarded his reputation in the realms of taste, by venturing to give him a commission, which, upon his honour, he considered a settled matter, at the price of fifteen guineas. "When I named that price," said Wilkie, "your Lordship only replied, 'Consult your friends.' I have consulted them, and they all say, I ought not to take less than thirty guineas; but since your Lordship appeals to your honour, my memory must be in the wrong: the price therefore is fifteen guineas." The Earl smiled, and gave him a check for thirty guineas. And so the controversy closed, but not before it had become the public talk of London. On the 5th of June he writes to his father:—

Dear Father,

Your letter of the 21st gave me very great pleasure indeed, particularly as you seemed to be reconciled to my remaining in London. I anticipated the pleasure you would feel on hearing of my success, and the joy it would give to many of your neighbours, particularly to those who were the means of bringing me forward in my profession; but, however great their admiration may be, it cannot be greater than the bustle that is made about me here. The Exhibition is never mentioned without some observation on the picture painted by the young Scotchman; and I have had calls from some of the first characters of the present day. My acquaintance is solicited by the most eminent painters; and I am taken out and paid respect to by people of the first

rank and quality. I was lately introduced to the Marquis of Stafford, by his own request; and I had the honour of a call from that mirror of patriotism, Mr. Whitbread, a man who, although, in his public character, he has professed an antipathy to all my countrymen, has nevertheless in private professed a great friendship for me.

The picture now in the Exhibition is at last sold, after a great disagreement with the Earl of Mansfield about the price. It was painted for him, and before it was finished he asked me what was the price. I told him I would be contented with fifteen guineas. He hesitated, and desired me to consult my friends what value I should put upon it. From the opinion of my friends and the public, and the offers that were made me, I began to consider it worth ten times the sum his Lordship had refused, and on the question being asked again, I demanded thirty guineas, on which his Lordship wrote me a letter, claiming the picture as his own at the original price I had proposed. A correspondence ensued, in which I remonstrated, until the subject became the general talk of the town, and in the meantime I had made me the offer twice of one hundred pounds for the picture. His Lordship sent for me, and after a very sharp debate on the subject, in which I contended that he had no right to the picture at that price, he said upon his *honour* he considered it as a bargain, and one which I agreed to stand to on these conditions. His Lordship gave me a draft for thirty guineas, which was double the sum first named; and, although I had two offers of one hundred pounds for the picture, I was happy in

having it settled in such a manner with his Lordship. Mr. Whitbread, happening to meet with his Lordship in company afterwards, congratulated him on the bargain he had got of my picture, and pleaded my cause with as much spirit and energy as he has shewn in the cause of the public against Lord Melville.

I called on Mr. Whitbread the other day, and took the Fair along with me to show to Mrs. Whitbread. She asked me to let it remain with her, and entreated me not to send it back to Scotland. Mr. Whitbread has engaged me to paint a picture for him. Tell the people of Pitlessie that they have more honour conferred on them now than they ever had before; tell them that they are seen and admired by the first people in the kingdom; and tell my grandfather that he is not the least admired among them.

I will probably write to Mr. Kinnear and Mr. Graham, as you suggest. I have sent a picture to Mr. Aitkin of Cupar, for which there will be an account of about ten pounds, which I have desired to be paid to you, and which I would wish to be applied in repaying Lord Crawford. I expect to be able to repay my brother very soon.

I am now redoubling my application, with the sure hopes of success. My ambition is got beyond all bounds, and I have the vanity to hope that Scotland will one day be proud to boast of

Your affectionate Son,

DAVID WILKIE.

"My ambition is got beyond all bounds, and I have the vanity to hope that Scotland will one day

be proud to boast of David Wilkie!" These remarkable words addressed to his father, were followed by others not less prophetic in a letter to his brother Thomas: the first and last boast which can be recorded of this distinguished and modest genius were breathed in secret to those he dearly loved; and after a long period of doubt and depression.

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

Dear Brother,

When I first came to London, I had scarcely a friend: the five recommendations I had were of little or no use, and since then I have had various successions of good and bad fortune, and the only support I had was from painting portraits, a branch of the art in which I luckily failed; but the want of success in this branch made me apply to another, in which I have already established a reputation that will live for ages.

I have now in one twelvemonth, without interest or solicitation, gained more friends and more employment than all the recommendations in the world could have got me. The picture I have now in the Exhibition was painted from the poem of "Will and Jean," when they meet in the ale-house. It was done for the Earl of Mansfield, but I am sorry to say we had a great deal of cavilling about the price; and his Lordship, for the sake of getting it a few guineas cheaper, has done himself more injury than he has done me.

D. W.

The other branch of art in which he had "already established a reputation that would last for ages," was that of domestic painting, and the picture which achieved this was The Village Politicians.

How this work grew out of the "ale caup commentators," in the ballad of Will and Jean, has been already related. In the early studies of the picture the range of characters was limited; and to impersonate Willie Gairlace and his tippling companions seemed his sole aim. As the painter's mind expanded, the subject expanded also; and before he arrived in London it had assumed, in his fancy at least, a character of national interest, and took its rank with historical compositions. To those who are old enough to remember those times when the yeast of the French Revolution was working in almost every mind; disturbing the calmest hearts, and filling every city and town and village with clubs which speculated on free constitutions, and societies which settled over the punchbowl the rights of mankind, no explanation of the picture need be offered: nor will those require it who have seen during an evening the change-house of a Scottish clachan, filled from the forge and the cartwright's shop, from the farm onstead, the shoemaker's and the weaver's cottages, with rustics eager to dispute and tipple, while the rejoicing landlord supplies them with news as well as liquor.

From scenes such as these, rather than from the tame and lifeless strains of Macneil, the painter caught the spirit which lives and breathes through the whole composition. The picture represents a party of rustic politicians, in a public house, met to discuss the affairs

of the state, to propose a redress of grievances, and, above all, to listen to the doctrines of a favourite newspaper, which they had commissioned at second hand twice a week. In the centre of this sanded parlour, which performs the part of kitchen also, stands a table replenished with materials for life and controversy; there is a half mutchkin stoup and glass, a half smoked tobacco pipe, a half eaten cheese, and a half-read newspaper. At the head of the table sits the village Hampden, one who, from his age and tranquil sagacity, is cordially the judge in all district disputes. A double quart pot, to quicken wit and sharpen judgment, is on the floor within reach of his left hand; while his right hand is feeling his chin, as if in doubt, and his eyes, lifted from the paper which he had just been reading, are fixed considerately on the ploughman, who, from the other end of the table, has started a scruple regarding the rights of man maintained by "The Gazetteer," a busy paper of the times. This is a young man; his ploughshare lies at his feet, brought to sharpen at the village forge; part of a peacock's feather is twined in the band of his hat; the back of his left hand rests on the table; his right finger, as if settling a problem, is descending into his open palm; his body is thrown forward; his brows are gathering and contracting; his lips are apart and earnest in speech; and his eyes are lighted up by the eager spirit of contradiction. It is evident that his remarks have awakened the controversial mood of the weaver and shoemaker, who, from the opposite side of the table, look into the foreground of the picture.

The first of these worthies, of a trade prone to dis-

putation, has, stung by the remarks of the other, sprung to his feet, that his words might fall with the more effect—has pushed his bonnet back from his brow, which is wrinkled and puckered with emotion, and thrust his open hand, with the fingers spread out like a loose-tied bunch of radishes, right in the ploughman's face; saying, with all the expression which art can give, "What I say is as plain as the palm of my hand!" while with his mouth, by the force of passion screwed into an opening like an auger-bore—his nostrils distended—his eyes flashing with amazement and wrath—he seems about to precipitate himself bodily upon the scene. His quieter comrade, the shoemaker, with the stump of a pen in his hat, to show that his learning is beyond the score and the tally, sustains him in the strife, and holds his knife in suspense over the cheese before him, listening eagerly to an argument which it is visible he condemns. The accessaries are all in keeping with this wondrous group, and help on the story: an old man, heedless of the stormy debate, reads resolutely in an old newspaper; a Highland drover, with his staff in his hand and his dog at his side, warms himself at the fire, ignorant perhaps of the language which he listens to; while another rustic scratches his head, in vexation to hear the glorious "Gazetteer"—the friend of the people—made a thing of shreds and patches. We must add to all the discreet landlady, who appears at the half-opened door with a fresh bottle in her hand, to hinder the debate from becoming dry.

CHAPTER V.

KINDNESS OF MR. ANGERSTEIN. — LETTER FROM MR. GRAHAM. — PAINTS "THE BLIND FIDDLER" FOR SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, AND "ALFRED IN THE NEATHERD'S COTTAGE" FOR MR. DAVISON. — MR. ANDREW WILSON'S RECOLLECTIONS OF WILKIE AT THIS TIME. — LETTERS FROM SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT. — WILKIE REVISITS CULTS.

THE impression which The Village Politicians made on all ranks was deep and abiding. At the dinner with which the Royal Academicians open their Exhibition—a dinner given to the prime of the land for rank and talent—the generous Mr. Angerstein was so moved by the excellence of Wilkie's picture, that, declaring it had all the spirit of Teniers and the humour of Hogarth, he pointed it out to the company as the star of the collection. Nor did the very precise way in which the Earl of Mansfield had behaved to the young painter lessen its merits. All who saw it felt that a picture of the first order had been obtained for a sum not equal to the interest of the money it was worth; nor is it improbable that a little envy mingled with their strictures. The Royal Academy, as a body, was far from insensible to the merits of the performance, though some did not find in it the principles of that high art, which the professors found easier to preach than practise. Northcote openly designated the style of Wilkie the Pauper

Style; and Hazlitt, a little of a painter and esteemed as a critic, re-echoed the snappish saying. Nor was Fuseli silent: he pointed to the picture, and said to Wilkie, in his own enigmatic way, "Young man, that is a dangerous work." "Ay, ay," said Wilkie, "really now." "That picture will either prove the most happy or the most unfortunate work of your life."

What he valued more than all the encomiums of the Royal Academy, was the approbation of his venerable father regarding his conduct to the Earl of Mansfield, to whom, as we have seen, he had written a full account. "I approve," said he, "of your sentiments, rather to suffer damage than incur the displeasure of Lord Mansfield; and as that nobleman was among the first who took notice of you, secure the continuance of his favour by all the honourable means in your power. Mr. Whitbread's conduct is very remarkable: he must be of a generous nature, and may be of essential service. But whilst busied in your profession, remember to be careful of your health. We have received much attention from Colonel Wemyss: he wrote me a card of congratulation, and requested your direction, that he might desire his lady to call on you on her way to Scotland." The Wilkie who sought for fame and bread among the towns and straths of Fife, and who was regarded with cloudy brows by the pious of Cults for presuming to trace their faces as they slumbered in their pews at church, and the Wilkie whom high earls were proud to employ, and whom the first-born of the realm courted to come to their country-seats, seemed different persons. He was first spoken of in

the North as an ingenious young man; for the Scotch are slow in saying all they think: then the mercury of their praise rose a few degrees, and he was a very clever painter of humble subjects; and, finally, he became, without excelling far his first productions, our distinguished countryman, and our own immortal Wilkie.

The master of the Edinburgh Academy added a few words of advice to the general song of praise. "I rejoice," says John Graham, "at your well-merited success, and also at your determination to redouble your exertions: by this, increase of reputation I trust will follow. Raphael excelled all other artists, through intense study and application, as well as by his genius. I would have you to beware of becoming a mannerist: here you may say, Why this caution? I will tell you why:—As your subjects are all national, it cannot be expected, in the situation where you are at present, that you will have the opportunity of painting them in from the natural figures from which you make your sketch: and it is when you work from these sketches that you are in danger of becoming a mannerist, as you are apt to rely on the strength of your memory, to supply any part you are in want of. Study from yourself—hands, feet, &c. Although I do not altogether disapprove of this last mode of study, yet too frequent an application of it is, in my opinion, very dangerous, and ought to be avoided. In London you cannot be at a loss to obtain figures of any country or character you may require; I therefore would advise you never to paint on your principal work without you have

nature before you. It is not literally meant by this, that you shall exactly copy the model; but it will be a great help to diversify your works, and prevent that sameness which you will observe in the productions of several great masters."

We have said that Sir George Beaumont followed Lord Mansfield in "commissioning" a picture from Wilkie. The artist, the motto of whose family arms should have been "let us be doing," soon sketched and commenced what proved to be one of the happiest of his pictures, that of The Blind Fiddler. The kind and warm interest which Sir George took in his success was not more flattering than his hints—those of taste and experience—were beneficial. "I cannot miss this opportunity," says Sir George, in a letter before me, dated June 15th, 1806, "of assuring you that, though I shall have great pleasure in possessing the picture you are painting for me, I have ten times more, in the prospect of seeing you improve your talents to the utmost. Pursue your studies without intermission; be not pursuaded to deviate from the line nature and inclination have marked out for you; associate with older men than yourself; do not suffer poor-minded and interested persons to render you discontented; remember yours is a liberal profession; never suffer it to degenerate into a trade: the more you elevate your mind, the more you will be likely to succeed."

Nor was it by good counsel alone that this generous gentleman sought to assist the views of the young artist. "When I was in town," he writes on the 10th of August, "I hinted to you that I was perfectly

ready to advance any of the money, even to the full price of the two pictures (The Blind Fiddler and The Gamekeeper), if it would be any accommodation to you: you declined it, I suspect through delicacy; I therefore repeat my offer, and sincerely assure you, that, as my wish is to serve you, I shall consider your receiving the money as no obligation whatever. I only fear you may be put to inconvenience, or lay yourself under an obligation to some one who may give you trouble hereafter, or take some advantage of your situation. You will pardon me if I am mistaken, as I know no more of your concerns than has accidentally dropt from Mr. Jackson.

"I am glad to hear that you are in more private lodgings.* It is better on all accounts: you will be able to pursue your studies with less interruption, and be free from the importunities which I know must beset you. I hope you make liberal use of the inestimable privilege of denying yourself. Nothing I think can hurt you but being too soon satisfied, and fancying yourself at the end of your labours, which will never be: but you bore the gust of applause so steadily and sensibly that I am satisfied you never will forget what is due to yourself, and your art."

Wilkie was on a visit to Mr. Whitbread, at Southill, when this letter found him,—a place memorable for the genius which annually assembled under its roof, as well as for its old English hospitalities.

* Wilkie had removed about this time from 11. Norton Street, Portland Road, Marylebone, to No. 10. Sol's Row, Hampstead Road.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir, Southill, Aug. 20. 1806.

I have now got your picture entirely finished, and have shown it to several people, who have flattered me with the idea that I have very much improved. Lord Mulgrave, in a letter which I lately received from him, requested me to take it to Yorkshire with me; but the distance, and the fear of its being damaged, have inclined me to let it remain in London.

As to the kind offer which you formerly made, and now repeat, of accommodating me with money, I return you my most sincere thanks. The reasons which I then gave would be sufficient to excuse me for not accepting of the offer; but as the picture is now finished, one of these reasons is removed, although I am still not at all in want of money.

I left London on Saturday last, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Opie, and am at present with them at Mr. Whitbread's. Mr. Reynolds is also here, and we have altogether a very pleasant party. I intend going from this to Mulgrave in a few days, as Lord Mulgrave has desired me to come as soon as I can, independent of Mr. Jackson, whose business will not allow him to leave London before the end of this month. My stay at Mulgrave will be but short, as my engagements require me to return to London as soon as possible. I have often had in my mind the advice you have often given me of improving myself as I go on. I am sensible still of having a great deal to learn,

and have been again attending the Royal Academy, in the hope that my improvement is not yet at an end.

I request to be remembered to Lady Beaumont, and in the hopes of seeing you soon,

I am, &c.

D. W.

He wrote at the same time to the noble owner of Mulgrave Castle.

TO THE EARL OF MULGRAVE.

My Lord, Southill, Bedford.

I had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter a few days before I left London, inclosing five guineas; for which, and for many other favours besides, I confess myself very much indebted to your Lordship.

I am at present with Mr. Whitbread, who was so kind as to invite me to spend a few days at his house, which I have taken as a stage on my way to Mulgrave. I intend to set off from this on Saturday, but I cannot tell at what time I may be at the journey's end. Mr. Jackson, I believe, will leave London about the first of next month. He had, when I saw him last, almost finished Lady Mary Fitzgerald's portrait, which I think he has done great justice to.

I have finished Sir George Beaumont's picture entirely, but I have not brought it along with me, as your Lordship requested, for, although the colours were perfectly dry, they were not so hard but that

they or even the panel might have sustained considerable injury from being carried to such a distance.

I wrote to Sir George yesterday, in consequence of a letter I lately received from him; but I believe I will soon have the pleasure of meeting with him myself. I have a few colours along with me for the purpose of making sketches.

I anticipate the pleasure I shall feel in studying the scenery about Mulgrave; but I am sorry my time will not permit me to enjoy that pleasure long, as my engagements in London require me to be back as soon as possible.

I remain, My Lord,
Your much obliged and very humble Servant,
D. W.

From Southill Wilkie went to Mulgrave, where he remained several weeks under the roof of the noble family who, having discovered on a tailor's shop-board the modest merit of Jackson, now entertained merit of a more original kind and of equal modesty. That Wilkie felt these high attentions, the letters from his father, to whom he regularly wrote, sufficiently intimate; but in his well-ordered and modest mind, neither the fame which he obtained, nor the consideration which accomplished men pay to genius, made any impression, save that of polishing his simplicity and his natural good manners. He returned to London, where fresh commissions awaited him. There is a passage, and a characteristic one, in the early history of England which relates that the great Alfred, when his kingdom was overwhelmed by the Danes, concealed

himself like a menial in a faithful neatherd's cottage, where, one day, he neglected to turn the cake at the hearth-fire, as he had been desired, but sat shaping a new yew bow, and allowed it to burn, when the neatherd's wife, a sharp woman, exclaimed, "Sirrah! if you cannot turn a cake you can eat one fast enough." To embody this incident in characters as vigorous and in colours as clear as he had done the Village Politicians was the wish of Alexander Davison. Wilkie felt the difficulty of the task; nor was it unperceived by his friend Sir George Beaumont, who thus wrote to him, soon after he had sketched in the picture:—

"I have frequently reflected upon your Alfred, and as it is a work rather out of the line in which you are known, and attended with very great difficulties, the good-natured critics flatter themselves it will be a delicious morsel for them when it makes its appearance; every part of it, therefore, should be well considered. With the old woman, and especially the man, I am perfectly satisfied; but Alfred, the handsome and agreeable, is rather insipid—I mean only as to his countenance. What I wish to submit to your consideration is this,—whether it would be amiss to infuse into his countenance surprise, with a slight mixture of indignation, at the sudden and indecorous attack of the old lady. This would relieve you from the almost impossible task of painting a face which should express meekness and power at the same time; and, also, by elevating the head, would give it the zest and dignity it at present wants: it would, moreover, give additional propriety and beauty to the expression

of the old man, who is fearful of Alfred betraying himself.

"You will recollect that much glory surrounds the character of Alfred — that any situation, however mean in itself, receives dignity from him: the story, if I may so express myself, should be told in blank verse. Whatever may have been the fact, a certain classical veil should be thrown over each trivial circumstance; and it is upon this ground I rather object at present to the expression of the girl who is taking up the cakes, as a little too ludicrous. The same natural manner of taking them up, nay, the same expression of countenance, may be preserved, only it should be softened, and the face more refined and delicate: at present it appears to me rather too large. I know you will excuse the freedom with which I tell you my mind, because I know there are too many who are looking forward with malicious eagerness to criticise the moment it makes its appearance. Not that I object to fair and honest criticism; and such a work as this must be liable to it, even if painted by an angel."

The hardest task to which a painter sets himself is to work to the imagination: the fancy of the public had already painted the heroic Alfred in air, and hung it up before them, and every succeeding century added to its dignity, till it took rank above all save the gods. It was to seize this picture of the mind that Wilkie strove: that he made a noble picture is generally felt, but that he came up to the dignity of the poetic Alfred admits of many doubts. The following is his answer on the subject: —

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir, 10. Sol's Row, Hampstead Road, Oct. 9. 1806.

I consider myself highly honoured by your kind communications, particularly on account of the advice you are pleased to give me on the study of my profession, a subject that interests me so much. Advice from one of your eminence and experience in the Art must be particularly valuable to one in my situation: conscious of which I have frequently endeavoured to retain in my mind the observations respecting the Art I have accidentally heard you make while I was in your company. The remarks you are pleased to communicate to me in your letter I conceive to be extremely just, and, I trust, will be of considerable use in the management of the picture I am at present engaged with. I am perfectly sensible of the difficulties I have to encounter in representing a king in the habit of a Saxon peasant, for it has been observed that painters even of eminence have had more assistance from the outward display of rich robes and garbs in giving dignity to their characters, than from any intrinsic greatness they had in themselves, from which I am fully aware that it will not be an easy matter to give majesty and rank where these symbols of greatness are wanting. I also agree with you, on the other hand, that every appearance of vulgarity should be avoided in the peasants themselves, as the principal object in an historical composition is to lead the mind back to the time in which the transaction happened, and the mind being always ready to associate elevated

ideas with antiquity, the illusion must be instantly destroyed, and the purpose of the picture entirely defeated, if the vulgar familiarity of the circumstances instantly puts us in mind of what passes every day before our eyes. It will however be necessary for me in the present instance to contrast the cottagers as much with Alfred as may prevent him from being mistaken for one of the family. I expect by the time you arrive in town to have the picture in such a state as may in some measure show that I have applied your observations to practical use.

My friend Mr. Haydon is at present going on vigorously with his picture of The Repose in Egypt. The subject Lord Mulgrave has projected accords entirely with his feelings, and he is very much flattered by such a mark of his Lordship's attention. He will also consider himself highly honoured by a call from you when you are in town.

D. W.

Of this commission, which promised to be one of a series of pictures from the History of England, Wilkie was justly proud: his other orders might have come from the sympathy natural to generous minds on seeing one so young, so unfriended, and so gifted, contending with high names and long-established masters in the race for fame; but the Alfred he received as a proof that he was now owned as a painter by his country; and reckoned worthy of giving shape, and sentiment, and colour to scenes and actions, at the mention of which the heart of every Briton beats. He thus writes to Alexander Davison:—

"I feel sensible of the honour, in being called upon to contribute in forming a grand collection of pictures illustrative of our national history. The way in which the proposal has been made I regard as flattering and kind to me, as a young artist — by giving me the choice of the subject.

"Availing myself of this indulgence, I beg to propose as the subject of the picture 'Alfred disguised in the Neatherd's cottage; reproached by the Neatherd's wife for allowing the cakes to burn which she had committed to his care.' I conceive this simple circumstance — though apparently trifling — may be made interesting, from its relation to one of the most distinguished characters in our history, and who may be regarded as the founder of our monarchy and adored constitution. Should this subject be to your mind I will exert myself in the execution to render it worthy of the series of pictures among which you propose to place it."

To vindicate the propriety of his own choice Wilkie read and studied, and referred to authorities till he filled his mind with the subject. He felt that he had denied to himself the aid of courtly circumstance and regal splendour, and must rely upon mind and dramatic skill alone for success: unless he enabled the world to recognise the king in the peasant he felt he would fail, and this failure, as his friend Sir George Beaumont told him, the malicious expected. His father was moved beyond his usual calm tranquillity when informed of this commission, and continued through several letters to inquire about King Alfred; saying but little of an illness which detained him

from the pulpit, or a sickness which drove his wife to seek relief in sea-bathing: in all these letters the young artist is warned to take care of his health, which constant study is likely to injure. But success had done as much for Wilkie as the physician, and the fresh free air of the country and society after his own heart, kept ill health at arm's length for a time.

Nor was Sir George Beaumont or Mr. Whitbread the only persons of condition from whom, in the earliest days of his fame, the young artist experienced acts of kindness. The Earl of Mulgrave not only commissioned works from his hand, but continued to interest himself in his fortunes. "As I have reason," says his Lordship, in a letter from Mulgrave Castle, "to hope that King Alfred is by this time completed in all his glory upon your canvas, I write to remind you that you are at full liberty to use your own discretion as to the subject of the picture you are to paint for me. As I shall be in London in about a fortnight from this time, I reserve what I have to say to you on a variety of subjects till we meet: I cannot, however, close my letter, without expressing my earnest wishes that every succeeding year may add to your fame and fortune, and carry your name to posterity far above all competition in the lively and interesting line of painting which you have adopted. I think you will be pleased with the specimens which your friend Jackson will bring with him from hence."

He was now busy with his picture of Sunday Morning, and that more vigorous effort, The Rent Day. In the Sunday Morning, there is peace in the air and in the house, and old and young are purifying their

persons to go to church. An old peasant has seated himself by the fire, drawn towards him a table, huddled all his books together, and they are not many, to support the back of an old looking-glass, and, razor in hand, is about to commence the removal of his bristly beard, when he is startled by the resisting outcry of a petted grandchild, whose face an unceremonious girl is washing. The old man seems irritated; first, with the rough edge of his razor, which threatens a severe shave, and secondly, with the resistance and noise of the child, who refuses to obey the use and wont of the household. The cottage is English in its furniture and arrangements, but the sentiment is for all time. This picture was ordered by the Earl of Mulgrave, that he might have a work in his gallery from Wilkie, while The Rent Day, from which not more was expected than was obtained, could be finished.

Whilst these pictures were on the easel, and others afloat in his mind, he became acquainted with his countryman, Andrew Wilson, an artist who has since distinguished himself in landscape and in the knowledge of foreign paintings, and filled the situation of Professor of Drawing in the College of Sandhurst, and of Master of the Trustees' Academy in Scotland, with reputation. When he returned from Italy, for the second time, in 1806, he heard of Wilkie, among his old associates, as a young artist of more than ordinary promise, and desired to become acquainted with him. "We met," says Andrew Wilson, in a letter from Genoa, written after the death of Sir David, at the request of his biographer, "we met, for

the first time, one morning at William Thomson's: there were present, besides Wilkie, young Haydon, William Havel, David Maclagan, and a Mr. Callendar, all seemingly very intimate; and I was told that it was their practice to meet in this way at one another's lodgings to converse about art. To be admitted into such a society was very agreeable to me. Wilkie I always found very cheerful; and as we did not devote the whole of our time to the professed object of our meeting, on one occasion, after some solicitation, he sung us one of Liston's songs, and imitated him in voice and manner so happily, that I all but thought I heard that eminent actor's voice. One peculiarity I could not help noticing; when any thing was said that Wilkie did not clearly understand, he did not hesitate to stop the conversation till it was explained: this to me seemed odd, especially as some of the explanations required were about simple matters in art. Most young men I then thought would have scrupled to appear ignorant; but I have since seen enough to set down this practice of his as a proof of superior understanding.

"Next day Wilkie came with Haydon to see the paintings which I had brought from Italy: they told me that Thomas Hope permitted artists to see his pictures during one day in the week. I went with Wilkie to the gallery regularly for several weeks: the study of the Dutch and Flemish masters, of whom I did not know much before, was a source of infinite pleasure. Wilkie's remarks were always accurate, and he would dwell for a whole morning on two or three pictures. I was so much delighted with his ob-

servations and enthusiasm, that I expressed a wish to see his own works, but his last finished picture had gone to Somerset House, and the Exhibition was not opened. I continued my visits to Mr. Hope's gallery with Wilkie, and extended them also to the galleries of the Marquis of Stafford and Mr. Angerstein. I did not perceive that the sudden fame of Wilkie made the smallest change: he continued the same modest man and the same anxious student, after the exhibition of The Village Politicians, as he was before. Indeed, he rather seemed to avoid notice, and to attach himself the more to his early companions in art. Before the Exhibition closed he had begun his picture of The Blind Fiddler. He had taken lodgings beyond Tottenham Court Road, partly for his health, and partly to avoid interruptions from ill-timed visitors. I sometimes took breakfast with him, and it was there I became acquainted with Jackson the painter. I remember the quiet glee with which Wilkie told us, that one day Bannister the actor called, and was shown in while he was sitting on a low seat, dressed as a woman, with a looking-glass before him, performing the part of model for himself. Wilkie was not the man to be in the least discomposed at being found in such a plight. Bannister gazed on him for a moment or so, and said, 'I need not introduce myself.' 'Truly no,' said Wilkie; 'I know you very well; but you see I can't move lest I spoil the folds of my petticoat. I am for the present an old woman, very much at your service.'"

Wilkie, having finished the picture of The Blind Fiddler, turned his thoughts on Alfred in the Neat-

herd's Cottage, and called forth all his skill to work it up to the ideas of Sir George Beaumont; who, as he had not interposed with his criticism during the progress of The Blind Fiddler, was the more entitled to be heard where he could have no interest save in the artist's success. The critic was strong where the artist was weak. He was a scholar as well as a man of taste; descended too from a line of kings and emperors; conversant with the history and character of the times, of which the artist desired to give a lively image; and, more than all, had much of that loftiness of soul which the man must share in who paints patriots and heroes. He was a gentleman delicate in all that affected the feelings of men of genius. With what graceful tenderness he hints the defects which he observed in the colouring of The Blind Fiddler:—

"Save me from myself," says Sir George, "is as rational a petition in painting as in morals: some peculiar colour is always striving to get the better of an artist—some finesse in pencilling, under the pretence of neatness, splendour, or dispatch, is for ever ready to take possession of him, and requires all his vigilance to oppose. I have endeavoured to detect something in you of this kind, that I might mention it as a warning. I perceive, or I think I perceive, a tendency to—what shall I call it?—a metallic appearance in some parts of the drapery of the woman with the child, particularly about the apron and the head-dress of the child. Round the blind man, also, there is a sort of slaty smoothness more than one observes in nature: this appears in his stockings and in various parts of his dress. I must again remind

you that these appearances are so slight that I almost doubted whether I should mention them; but, on consideration, I thought I should ill act the part of a friend, did I not warn you in time; for a manner once established is, I verily believe, invincible. As to any particular colour gaining upon you, I see no symptoms of it at present; when I do I shall not fail to act the part of a flapper. Do not trouble yourself to answer this: you are much better employed, and will accept this mark of my good wishes as intended."

This letter was not answered for some time; for the remarks on the Alfred had given work to his pencil, which was not more necessary than difficult to accomplish. While labouring to give high sentiment the ascendency in the picture, he thought on his native place, and on Kinnear of Kinloch, to whom the following letter was addressed in the latter end of the autumn of 1806:—

Dear Sir,

I have no doubt but you would rejoice to hear of the unexpected encouragement that has so happily attended me, particularly as you yourself were the chief promoter of my exertions in that branch of the art which was so congenial with my inclinations, and which is probably most suited to my abilities.

When I first came to London I found the picture I had painted for you of less use to me than I expected. It lay beside me for months without being seen by any body; it was, however, at last accidentally shown to the Countess of Mansfield, in consequence of which

Lord Mansfield commissioned me to paint the picture exhibited in the Royal Academy, after which the Pitlessie Fair was also seen by a great number of people, and Lady Elizabeth Whitbread desired it to be sent to her house. I have now got it back again. It has, upon the whole, been admired; but more on account of its being painted in Scotland, than for any intrinsic merit it has in itself.

I am at present engaged with a picture which occupies my whole attention. It is for a Mr. Davison, of St. James's Square, who has engaged a number of artists to paint him a gallery of pictures from the History of England. The subject that I have chosen is the well-known circumstance of the burning of the cakes which occurred to Alfred, while disguised in the cottage of the neatherd. This picture must be finished by the end of December, as I have many other pressing engagements on hand.

D. W.

While his pencil was working up the picture of Alfred to the heroic altitude which Sir George Beaumont had assigned, Wilkie was not unmindful of the duty which he owed to his family: he sent a cask of London porter to his mother, for whose complaint Dr. Grace had prescribed it; he assisted his sister Helen to a piano; and he aided in sending out to India a young lady, Miss Walker, a minister's daughter of Fifeshire, who was betrothed to his elder brother John, an officer in the service of the East India Company. Nor will the following letter be read without interest, brief though it be, from the almost

scriptural simplicity of the account which the venerable pastor of Cults renders of his household: "David, your mother is very anxious to know if you have recovered the health in the country which you lost in town, and what picture you are painting. When I wrote last, I mentioned my design of subsetting the eleven acres of ground, including the glebe which I have in my hands, and disposing of what stock I could spare. Since that time I have set nine acres to Robert Graham, and William his brother, for thirty-one pounds per annum, and I retain the two acres of Easter glebe in my own hands, for the support of a cow. I have also sold by roup my horse, three cows, and corn and fodder, and retain one cow and the hay-stack; so that as your mother and I are but tenderly, we expect to have much trouble through the year." With what composure this good man sets his house in order!

The progress of Wilkie was not watched by the good pastor of Cults with more anxiety than it was by the accomplished proprietor of Coleorton Hall, Sir George Beaumont. "I suppose you have now completed your Alfred," says the Baronet, in a letter dated from his seat at Dunmow, on the 2d of February, 1807; "and you may be sure I am anxious to know whether you have in any degree satisfied yourself, for I neither expect nor wish to hear that you are quite contented. I know few things more unpleasing in a picture than too great smoothness: there are no objects in nature perfectly smooth except polished objects and glass; all other objects are varied by innumerable lights, reflections, and broken tints:

perhaps no man ever understood this fact better than Rembrandt; and it is this which renders his drag, his scratch with the pencil-stick, and his touch with the palette-knife, so true to nature, and so delicious to an eye capable of being charmed by the treasures of the palette: and it is the want of this which renders Wouvermans and other painters of high excellence in other respects comparatively insipid. I can no longer resist my desire to have my picture sent into the country: if you mean to exhibit it, I will take care it shall be returned in time. I need not add, though I will not press it, that if it be convenient to you to come down to Dunmow, I shall be very happy to see you."

Wilkie used to declare that when he met Sir George Beaumont, or had a letter from him, he always studied with alacrity and cheerfulness for the rest of the day: he spoke of him too as a man whom nature had designed for a great painter, but whom high fortune had marred.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir, 10. Sol's Row, Hampstead Road, Feb. 7. 1807.

I was honoured with your first letter shortly after you left London; and although I have been thus long in acknowledging the receipt of it, I have not neglected the observations it contained. I compared them carefully with the pictures before me, endeavouring to find out from whence the errors arose, that I might know how to avoid them for the future.

I finished the Alfred, and delivered it to Mr. Davison at the appointed time, and I have since had the happiness to hear that it gives him satisfaction. How far I have succeeded in the character of Alfred and the other parts of the picture I would rather forbear expressing my opinion, as I naturally wish that your prepossessions should be as favourable to it as possible.*

Mr. Charpentier has already sent for The Blind Fiddler for the purpose of packing it up and sending it to Dunmow. I have advanced a considerable way with The Rent Day, and I find it a subject that will suit me even better than I expected. Mr. Haydon is proceeding on carefully with his picture; but although he works constantly at it, it will still take him a considerable time to finish. He talks frequently of the subject he has proposed for you, but has not yet done much in sketching it. He requests to be remembered to you.

I understand from Mrs. Phipps that you have finished two pictures since you went to Dunmow. This I was glad to hear.

As to the kind invitation which you are so good as to repeat, I am afraid it will not be in my power to accept it at present, from the necessity I am under of being in Scotland a considerable time during summer. I however look forward with agreeable anticipations to a future opportunity of enjoying your society.

D. W.

* The Alfred is now in the gallery of Sir Thomas Baring, Bart.

When The Blind Fiddler reached Sir George Beaumont, it found him amid the society in which he regularly moved—men of rank and men of talent; he caused it instantly to be unpacked, placed it in a fine light, and called on all his visitors to admire a wonder greater than The Village Politicians, and wrought, too, by the same hands. But perhaps the gratification at Dunmow scarcely equalled the pleasure felt at the manse of Cults when a letter was found announcing the intelligence that, as soon as he had placed his picture of The Blind Fiddler in the Exhibition, and enjoyed the paintings of the Royal Academy for a day, he would set off for Scotland. "In the midst of all this," says his father, with his usual brevity, "Mr. Lister of Auchtermuchty came in, and told us he had been at Kinloch, and had seen the picture of Pitlessie Market, which was greatly admired by the whole company, and much esteemed by Mr. and Mrs. Kinnear. Your mother is far from well, but is much revived by the thoughts of seeing you. Owing to the severity of the season, I have been ailing more than usual."

The great fame which The Village Politicians had brought, and the small pittance which the picture had put into his pocket, were matters which now passed through the mind of Wilkie. He could not fail to remember that Hogarth, to whom he had already been compared, would probably have starved by his paintings had he not seized the graver and given them with equal force from the copper. He had not learned to engrave, it is true, but that art, since the days of Strange and Woollett, had become very popular in England. The gravers of Sharp, Anker Smith,

Schiavonetti, Raimbach, and others scarcely less eminent, had diffused a knowledge and a love of British painting over Europe. What Wilkie required was a spirit akin to his own, capable of entering into his peculiarities of character, seizing the hue of mind and calm humour of the north in which he excelled, and, without losing his peculiar touches, which like the thumbings, and fingerings, and markings with the pencil-stick and palette-knife of Rembrandt, went to make up the sum total of attraction in the original. An artist of this rare stamp he found in John Burnet, his fellow-student in the Trustees' Academy of Edinburgh; who, coming to London in 1806, seemed undecided whether he would abide by the graver or the pencil, and so continued alternately to hold both—the former with unequalled ease and vigour, and the latter with a social and natural glee which has made his Game of Draughts popular in all lands where humour is felt. On this he consulted one every way capable of advising him.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir, 10. Sol's Row, Hampstead Road, March 3. 1807.

While I had the happiness of hearing that you had received the picture, I was, at the same time, particularly gratified by the pleasure and satisfaction it seems to have given you. I intend to follow your advice in exhibiting it, for which purpose I will require to have it in town before the end of this month, as the time of receiving the pictures at the Royal Academy is about the beginning of next month.

When I saw you last I requested your permission to have a print engraved from the picture, and since that time I have had several applications, and some considerable offers made me for the privilege of it, by people of respectability. I find that it will be utterly impossible to get it done in the stroke engraving from the length of time it will take, and that, if it is to be done in the chalk manner, even then a great part of the plate must be done from a small copy of the picture, as otherwise, from the tedious process of engraving, it would require the picture to be much longer in the hands of the engraver, than I would by any means wish it to be absent from you. I request, therefore, that you will do me the favour, when you write, to give me your opinion on the subject, and advise me how to act. Since Lord Mulgrave has been in town he has seen the picture I am now engaged with, and likes the subject very much. Mr. Jackson is at present giving very regular attendance at the Royal Academy. Mr. Haydon seems to improve very much in execution as he advances with his picture.

D. W.

"I am really at a loss," says Sir George, "what advice to give you respecting the engraving; one thing is certain, there cannot be a more pernicious libel on a good picture than a bad print, and therefore as I trust you will ever find I prefer your real advantage even to the pleasure of possessing and looking at your works, great as the self-denial will be, you shall have the use of the picture long enough to give the engraver all the advantage possible, only, as those

gentlemen are apt to be both careless and dilatory, I have no doubt but you will stimulate his exertions, and take care the picture is not injured. I own I am sorry it cannot be executed in the stroke manner, and I wish it were possible for you to etch the hands and faces, for such has been the general neglect of drawing in this country, that I much doubt whether you will find a man capable of giving truth and life to the hands, or the exquisite and appropriate expression to the faces, and you well know how much you will suffer, especially in foreign countries, by not having tolerable justice done you in these respects.

"Another thing strikes me forcibly. I dread your engaging yourself in a traffic of any kind: it is necessary you should preserve that liberality of mind, I know you possess, inviolate, or you will not give the talents Heaven has blessed you with all the fair play necessary to bring them to perfection. You will find the impositions and extortions of printers, publishers, &c. &c., will harass and distract your mind, and fill it with notions you have no idea can take possession of it at present. I wish it were possible for you, without loss, to get rid of the whole concern immediately upon publication, but as this is a subject which requires mature consideration, I dare say you will not hastily commit yourself, and we will talk it over at leisure when I come to town. One thing more I shall take the liberty of recommending, and that is, the price it will be prudent for you to fix upon your pictures. I have no doubt, that at present you might have any price you might think it reasonable to ask; but the question is, whether those people who are willing and able to give high

prices are sufficiently numerous. I have seen so many instances of young men overrating the patronage of the public, and in consequence remaining surrounded in more advanced life by their own works, that, possessing and feeling the regard I do for you, I could not refrain from this hint, and on this ground I know you will excuse me. I hope you are more careful about your colours than about your ink, which was so completely faded by the time your letter arrived here that I could hardly read it."

Wilkie treasured up in his mind the valuable opinions of his friend regarding the engraving of his pictures, and he resolved to have his works translated, or rendered into the black and white of ink and paper, by none save the most skilful. At the same time he could not but feel how valuable to a great painter a great engraver was: while the canvas itself remained fixed as fate in some rich man's gallery, and only known to the fortunate few who had influence to open the reluctant doors, the impressions from the graver flew lightly over the world, and carried into the cabin of the cotter, as well as into the hall of the lord — the same shape, and sentiment, and feeling — we had almost said the same colour — which charmed us in the original. The painter who disregards this auxiliary art seems willing to lose the influence of half of his own power, and, what is equally remarkable, to lose the honourable profits of his own genius: he loses the half of his power, because he keeps half the world in ignorance of his strength; and he foregoes the honourable fruits of his own genius, because he has as fair a right to share in the profits of the engraving as the

hand has which directs the graver. The season of the Royal Academy Exhibition arrived while Wilkie was meditating on these matters, and he sent to it his Blind Fiddler, with but few of the fears which accompanied his Village Politicians.

Now those who imagine that the Royal Academy is wholly composed of high-minded men of genius, who are not only generous by nature and free from envy, but proclaimed "Esquires" by letters patent, are really gentlemen one and all, can know but little of human nature, and less of bodies corporate. The fame of Wilkie, which was almost on every lip, was not heard, it is said, without a leaven of bad feeling on the part of some of the members whose genius ought to have raised them above such meanness, and whose works being in a far different line of art, were fairly out of the embittering influence of rivalry. We know not how this was of our own knowledge, but we know that in arranging the pictures on the walls of the exhibition rooms, an envious academician can make one fine picture injure the effect of another, by a startling opposition of colour, while a generous academician can place the whole so as to avoid this cross-fire of colours, and maintain the harmony which we look for in galleries of art. When the doors of the Exhibition were opened in 1807, while painters, as usual, complained, some of pictures being hung in an unsuitable place, and others of works placed in injurious lights, the public were not slow in observing that The Blind Fiddler, with its staid and modest colour, was flung into eclipse by the unmitigated splendour of a neighbouring picture, hung for that purpose beside it,

as some averred, and painted into its overpowering brightness, as others more bitterly said, in the *varnishing* time which belongs to academicians between the day when the pictures are sent in, and that on which the Exhibition opens. There must be some mistake, we trust, in this; the arrangement, of which we know complaints were openly made, must have been accidental, for who can believe that a studied attempt could be made to push back into darkness a youthful spirit struggling into light, or that an able artist could not but know that he might as well try to keep the sun from rising as a genius such as Wilkie's from shining.

If such a thing occurred, Wilkie was amply avenged in the praises of his picture, which were too loud to permit even the voice to be heard which averred that his drawing was not in the academic style of art, and that his colouring was too subdued and cold. The human nature which he had stamped on the whole scene triumphed over all; the pictures of the academicians, in the same room, with all their scientific drawing and glow, failed to attract. The visitors crowded to The Blind Fiddler; and Jupiter presenting to Diana her Bow and Arrows, Flora unveiled by the Zephyrs, nay, even the Sun rising through Vapour, or The Blacksmith's Forge, with its overpowering light, were disregarded in comparison. In unity of purpose, this is probably the finest work of Wilkie; in variety of character and force of delineation, he afterwards equalled, if he did not surpass it. It tells the story as plainly as if the actors spoke: the very name of the work is super-

fluous, for no one can look upon it without feeling and understanding the whole. A blind and strolling fiddler, who, if painted since Scott's Redgauntlet was written, might have passed for his Wandering Willie, with his wife and two children, has sought shelter or rest in a shoemaker's cottage; and, to requite such hospitality, has taken his fiddle from the case, screwed the pegs with a careful hand, slanted his chest over the instrument, like one who knows his craft, and is treating the family to one of his favourite tunes. The shoemaker's wife, pleased with the music, but still more with her youngest child, is dandling it on her knee in unison with her husband's thumbs, who is cracking them in quick time, for the air seems a lively one.

Two children, a little in advance of their mother, are standing gazing, with wondering eyes, on the rustic musician, marvelling, no doubt, how one so old and blind can produce such delightful sounds; the youngest has stopt a go-cart, lest the drag along the floor should hurt the harmony: their elder brother — a sort of cottage Puck — just old enough to have shed two of his foreteeth, is mimicking, with some skill, the motions of the musician: his fiddle is a pair of old bellows, and his glee is all his own. Behind him a girl has left her wheel, on which she was spinning hemp for her master's thread, and listens anxiously to the music: the sound, perhaps, has carried her fancy far away to some merry scene, where she danced to the tune with a lad to her liking. The day is cold: we guess, by the close-hooded wife of the mendicant, and her little vagrant warming his hands, that it is winter. She listens indeed, but she

listens like one accustomed to such sounds, while the shoemaker's father, who has given his seat to the musician, stands listening, pleased but not joyful. A rude drawing of a soldier with a sword in his hand, said to be a copy from one of the artist's Pitlessie school attempts, is stuck on the wall, while on the chimney mantel lie several well-thumbed volumes, beside the stiff formal head of a parson, by which the artist designed perhaps to intimate that this merry cobbler was inclined to Methodism.

"The Blind Fiddler," observes Andrew Wilson, in continuation of his remarks upon Wilkie, "excited great admiration in the Exhibition; it was regarded as a vast improvement even upon The Village Politicians, and one of the most perfect works of the kind ever produced by any British artist, and fairly established his fame. His great youth and his extraordinary merit induced several eminent persons, lovers and patrons of art, to consider the best means of encouraging a painter of such wonderful promise. I was a frequent visitor of the gallery of Mr. West, President of the Royal Academy, and by accident was present one day when several noblemen and gentlemen met, seemingly for the purpose of consulting West on the subject. One of them, I remember, observed, that perhaps it might not be prudent to give Wilkie too many commissions at once, as he would probably exert himself beyond his strength: besides, a young man wrought better from hope sometimes than from certainty. To this remark the President replied, 'Never in my whole experience have I met with a young artist like Wilkie: he may be

young in years, but he is old in the experience of his art: he is already a great artist, therefore do not hesitate in offering him commissions and all the encouragement in your power. I have the most perfect confidence in his steadiness, as well as in his abilities. I consider him an honour to his country.' One of those persons (Sir Francis Bourgeois, I think) agreed to speak in his favour to the Duke of Gloucester, who had at that time given commissions to several artists. For his Royal Highness he painted The Card Players, a subject which afforded but little variety of character." Those noble persons had not been accustomed to pay for any productions of British art save portraits, the offspring of half a dozen sittings. They did not, perhaps, reflect that one of Wilkie's compositions was the labour of a year, and that fifty pounds was no remuneration for models and colours alone. The time was not far distant when a sense of this pressed sorely on him.

May had not well begun when Wilkie was on his way to Scotland. He had a twofold joy to taste of the purest and sweetest kind; he had to meet his father and his mother with fame on his brow, and to visit the friends of his native place, to bestow rather than receive honour. Genius is seldom so happy; before it has risen to distinction almost all who loved it in youth, or hoped its ascent, or desired to rejoice in its joy, have passed to the dark and narrow house, and left its welcome to a colder generation. Wilkie was more fortunate; and the few weeks he spent at this time in Scotland he called the happiest of his life. Nor was he forgotten by the friends he had

acquired in the south. A letter soon followed him to Fife from Sir George Beaumont, who loved to talk with Wordsworth on poetry and with Wilkie on painting.

"The remark," he says, "which you made upon the effect the Exhibition produced upon your picture, namely, that you expected its tone would be lowered, but that you did not expect its richness would have been diminished so much, appears to me so just, and so exactly accords with the remarks I myself made, and which I endeavoured to express to you in my letter from Dunmow, that I have no doubt but you will daily improve, and at length obtain that richness of surface and fulness of colour which was the only excellence I thought likely to escape you. The essentials—expression and feeling—I was never in fear about. Study Rembrandt, and Ostade, and Watteau, but especially Rembrandt. I know his large pictures are too rough for your purpose; but conceive them reflected in a concave mirror, and you will immediately see all you want.

"I think you hardly allow time enough for reading; you should enrich your mind by the study of our best authors, especially the poets. You can never read Shakspeare, Milton, and Spenser too much. Some of our best novelists, as Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, are also worthy of your attention. Don Quixote I particularly recommend: let him lie upon your table, and read a chapter when you are fatigued with your work; it will refresh and improve your mind. As I am sure you are convinced I have your interest much at heart, I know you will excuse

my requesting you not to let any one engrave from your works without much consideration, and by no means to suffer the booksellers to fix your name to prints unworthy of you. If you favour me with a line, direct to me at Keswick, Cumberland, to which place I shall proceed in a few days, to enjoy the great pleasure of contemplating the beauties of that country with my excellent friend Wordsworth, and profiting by his remarks and conversation. Although I have not the pleasure of knowing your father, pray present my best congratulations to him on your success. Lady Beaumont desires her compliments. I fear you had a turbulent sea-voyage, but if it prevent you from running such risks in future perhaps it may be a wholesome admonition."

This letter found Wilkie, instead of holding high festival with the "Folks of Fife," slowly recovering from a fever brought on through excitements by sea and land.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir, Cults, June 30. 1807.

I arrived here after a tolerable passage by sea, in about a week from the time I left London, and the reception I met with from my father and mother was such as might naturally be expected after the fortunate circumstances that have occurred to me during my absence. But I am sorry to say, my time since has not been spent in those pursuits of study that I was proposing to employ myself in when I saw you

last; for, almost immediately after my arrival, I was seized with a severe fever, which has not only prevented me from doing any thing ever since, but obliged me to confine myself a great part of the time to bed. I have, however, the happiness to find myself, by medical assistance and the care and attention of my friends, so far recovered as to be able to walk and ride in the fields, and I expect soon to begin some studies from nature, for which there are several good subjects in this neighbourhood.

I was much gratified by your kind letter. I may even say it has contributed to my recovery. The frank and open manner in which you give me your opinion and advice are testimonies of your friendship, that I consider myself happy in being favoured with. My father and mother beg leave to present their respectful compliments, with their grateful acknowledgments, for your attentions to me. I shall be happy to know how your health is, as you were rather complaining when in London.

D. W.

Kind inquiries as well as kindly letters were not wanting to contribute to the restoration of health, which had indeed been shaken, but not seriously injured. The noble families of Leven and Crawford, who had interested themselves in the first dawn of his fame, called to rejoice with him now when it had brightened into day; nor were his old school comrades, on whose boyish faces he first tried his pencil, backward; neither did those older and graver persons whom he had introduced in his Pitlessie Fair hesi-

tate, it is said, to call and forgive him, for having handed them up to fame in the lasting colours of his pencil. He, however, was uneasy, for he felt that the fever had lessened his vigour, and he complained, in a letter to a fellow-student in London, that he was rendered unfit for any thing like study, and was not more than capable of walking, without assistance, across the room. "I am, however, considerably recovered," he adds, "and have reason to be thankful that I am in my father's house. I hope soon to be able, with a little care, to take a ride through the neighbourhood." To the Rev. James Lister, of Auchtermuchty, he writes thus of his professional success: — "For the first nine months after I went to London I met with very little success; so little, indeed, that I had almost determined to return to Scotland, and betake myself to that branch of the art in which I had been encouraged formerly; but the unexpected success which my first effort obtained in the Royal Academy Exhibition expanded my views, and determined me, by the help of study and application, to persevere in this change in the object of my studies, and carry it out as far as it would go." In a similar strain, it will be remembered, he addressed his father and his brother, when The Village Politicians threw an unlooked-for light on his path.*

* When I first came to London, I had but a small sum of money saved from my labours in Fifeshire — about 60*l.* I had no friend previously in London, and contrived to go through the first twelvemonth in very hard study, with very little encouragement, and certainly within the expense of 100*l.* I also remember having a sort of dread of returning to Fifeshire, and took every means to get such a footing here as might render it unnecessary." — *To John Anderson, Esq. Jan.* 1. 1820.

The works of the British school of art seem the result of chance—the offspring of accident, rather than of any settled aim or fixed purpose of soul. A painter makes a portrait; a family group; a landscape with cattle in it; or, touched by some passage in the popular poet of the day, he embodies the scene, and sends the result to be hung up on the Academy walls,—such works generally compose what is called the Exhibition of the Royal Academy: and when we have added a few busts, a portrait-statue, and an allegory in honour of the heroes of the last "Gazette," we have said all that can be said in honour of the sister art of Sculpture. An artist is called in as a sort of physician to alleviate the pangs of private vanity, but there is no such thing as a principle observed in his productions. Hogarth, indeed, had an aim of this nature, and created a series of works, dramatic, satiric, and moral, which are truly national; but the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds are but the portraits of such persons as were in love with their own looks, together with a few heads of the sons of the morning amongst them: the works of Sir Thomas Lawrence are of the same stamp: Fuseli went far to render our sublime poetry ridiculous by a series of fantastic compositions: Hilton, indeed, had an epic aim in almost all he attempted, and with his fine eye in drawing, and his taste for colour, approached nigh to Spenser: but it was reserved for Wilkie, without leaning on the polished rod of verse or the staff of history, to evoke out of the domestic manners and circumstances of this island, a series of noble pictures, which, with all the glow of Teniers, without his grossness, exhibit a dramatic

skill of delineation, in which Hogarth is alone his equal. He had already painted the first and second pictures of this great series in The Village Politicians and The Blind Fiddler: the one rebuking our clubs of rustic legislators, the spawn of the French revolution, and the other calling us to the charities of domestic life; a third he had left on the easel, namely The Rent Day, where he holds out a lesson on the insolence of office, and shows how age, and want, and widowhood suffer from the hard of heart. This is the new line in which he obtained, as he says to Mr. Lister, his unlooked-for success; and from which he says to his father and his brother he hoped for immortal fame.

With these thoughts Wilkie was busied whilst he lay alone on a sick bed at Cults; and the resolution which he formed was pursued with but little deviation from that hour to his last. In all that involved the dignity of his art he met with a wise counsellor in Sir George Beaumont, and also an agreeable correspondent. In a letter from Keswick he says, "I hope by this time you have recovered your strength, and that after what has passed you will return by land. I caught a cold four and twenty years ago in crossing from Dover to Ostend, and I verily think I feel the effects of it to this day; certain it is a fever succeeded which reduced me to a mere skeleton, and I could not entirely get rid of it all the time I was abroad.

"I have been incessantly engaged contemplating the beauties of nature since I arrived at this place, and taking advantage of the fine weather, for which Keswick is not particularly famous, or I should have

answered your letter immediately after receiving such an account of your health. As to my own, which you are so kind as to inquire after, I think I am stronger, and can take more exercise without fatigue. I have left off wine altogether, and I think I am the better for it. As to the essentials in your art, I am in no fear for you; but the ornamental will require your constant attention. Richness, transparency, and effect make so large a portion of the pleasure we derive from looking at a picture, and add so much—particularly the last—to the sentiment of the work, that it would be very unwise to neglect them. I think, though I speak with some diffidence, that you will not be able to satisfy yourself entirely, without making more use of the ground than you have done in your two last pictures. Certain it is, all the Flemings were as careful of their ground as a tinter is of his paper; and even Rembrandt, although he loads, and (if I may say so) nourishes, the picture with colour in the light and emphatic points, yet he is generally thin in the shadows; and I think we observed together, in my little picture by him of the Descent from the Cross, wherever he had failed, he has cut out the paper, and inserted a fresh piece: despairing, probably, of being able to give it that relish and lightness which, to his fine eye, was so very essential. I shall stay here a month longer. It is hardly out of your road as you return."

Jackson, for whom Wilkie ever expressed a warm friendship, constantly corresponded with him while in Scotland. That distinguished painter, under the auspices of Lord Mulgrave and Sir George Beaumont,

now entered on his career, which was destined to be so short.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir, Cults, 2d August, 1807.

The earnest inquiries after my health expressed in your letter produce in me the most grateful feelings. I am now almost completely recovered.

I suppose you will now and then be amusing yourself by making studies from those beauties you so much admire in the neighbourhood of Keswick. I have been of late trying some experiments in painting on mill-board, making use of it as an absorbent ground. But, although I am sensible of the advantage that is gained by the clearness and purity of the colours, yet I find as much difficulty in preserving that correctness of tint and neatness of touch so easily acquired by the other method, that I am almost inclined to doubt the propriety of the process, particularly when I reflect that time itself will, in all probability, perform the office of an absorbing ground. I have not as yet done much in the way of sketching here; indeed, I have been prevented from doing as much as I ought from the want of proper materials. I expect, however, to get some from Edinburgh soon, which is the only place where articles of that kind may be had. I am at present in the habit of hearing from my friend Jackson, who, from his own account, is going on briskly with a large group of portraits of the Jennerian Society. He says he has already had two sittings

from the Marquis of Huntly, and expects the Duke of Bedford soon. I earnestly hope that Mr. Jackson may finish this picture.

D. W.

Wilkie's delicate state of health, in spite of his sister's care and his mother's tenderness, continued through August and September: at length illness began to yield to youth on his side, and attention and skill on the part of others, and he grew impatient to resume his studies again. He could find but few of the materials of his art in Fifeshire, save the human character which is impressed so indelibly on his productions. Those curious in county history say, that when in want of a head to help out either the seriousness or the humour of any of his scenes, he had recourse to Cults, which supplied all he required. He remained at the Manse till October was begun, and then set off for Edinburgh, to which city his mother accompanied him. Disregarding the fears of Sir George Beaumont, he took shipping at the pier of Leith, and without any accident or any suffering (for the weather was fair and fine) arrived in London.

CHAPTER VI.

PAINTS "THE CARD-PLAYERS" FOR THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER, AND "THE RENT DAY" FOR THE EARL OF MULGRAVE.—EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL.

In the following letter to his brother in India Wilkie gives a brief account of his visit to Cults, and of his expectations in art. He was still living in Sols' Row, Hampstead Road.

TO LIEUTENANT JOHN WILKIE.

My dear Brother,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been a visit to Scotland, where I spent about five months in that most idle of all occupations, visiting my friends. It was, however, a very pleasant time, and the attentions I received in consequence of the success I had met with in London, made me almost forget the exertions that were necessary to secure my future reputation.

I have, since I returned to London, so far made up for my negligence in Scotland, that I have completely finished the picture which I intend for the Duke of Gloucester.

You will very naturally conclude from the accounts you have most likely heard of the fame that I have acquired that I must be rapidly accumulating a

fortune. It is, however, I am sorry to say, very far from being the case. What I have received since I commenced my career has been but barely sufficient to support me; and I do not live extravagantly either. Indeed, my present situation is the most singular that can well be imagined. I believe I do not exaggerate when I say that I have at least forty pictures bespoke, and some by the highest people in the kingdom; yet, after all, I have but seldom got any thing for any picture I have yet painted. I have some intention, in order to establish a criterion to regulate my prices by, of putting a picture up at a public sale, where alone I think I can have justice done me.

D. W.

Though rising every day in reputation, Wilkie could not fail to observe that the great masters of the calling had not gained their fame without genius, nor maintained it without continual study. He therefore — though some marvelled — attended the classes of the Royal Academy as usual; listened to the lectures on painting and sculpture of Tresham and Flaxman, and, though never contending for a prize, he studied from the naked figure with unremitting diligence, and, as his drawings show, with far more success than from the plaster or the marble. His eye lightened up, it is said, when the living model was placed in a graceful or agreeable posture; and he has been heard to mutter unconsciously to himself, "Nature alone is the truth; the rest is but a beautiful fiction." Nor did he refuse to the pictures which he had finished,

but not sent home, the advantage of this growing knowledge: when he chanced to see a form or a turn which he could employ usefully, he grafted it into the picture; and the care with which he performed this he reckoned a proof of its propriety, while the skill with which he achieved this difficult operation showed that he was rapidly acquiring mastery in his art.

On Alfred in the Neatherd's Cottage he bestowed, as we have partly shown, uncommon pains—such pains as in ordinary hands defeat their own object, by overpowering the faculties instead of stimulating them. He considered and reconsidered the story; drew the figures singly, then grouped them; and, not content with calling in the living model for each, to secure the truth of the posture, he modelled the whole in clay, that he might ascertain the light and shade of the composition. The Neatherd of Alfred, like the Swineherd of Ulysses, is a prudent man, and one, too, of substance; but, unlike the Ithacan, the Saxon knew his heroic master, for, having disguised him in servile attire, he concealed him in his farmstead from the search of the Danes, and, harder still, from the knowledge of his own wife. His household has a substantial Saxon look, and, under the management of his wife and two handmaidens, looks trim and comfortable: the Neatherd himself is seen entering with a burthen of firewood on his shoulder, while his spouse makes her appearance from an exterior chamber with business on her brow. She has not come a moment too soon; for Alfred, to whom she had confided the care of turning a batch of cakes at the

hearth fire, had, in the joy of shaping a good yew bow, neglected his duty, and allowed them to burn, while his mind was busied in the battle field. The house dame, who holds carelessness to be a crime, and frugality a virtue, bears in her face, as plain as colour and character can say it, "If ye cannot turn a cake, ye can eat one fast enough." The disguised prince, who has a new killed rabbit at his foot, rouses himself from a reverie of "bills and bows," and sees, with mingled dignity and confusion of face, one of the handmaids extinguishing a burning cake, while the house-dog has stalked beneath the table with another. Though a peasant in attire, his look is natural, noble, perhaps kingly, and, more than all, simple and unaffected. The accessories are in keeping with the principal group: the Neatherd has a look of alarm, for he dreads that Alfred, stung with the taunts of his wife, may betray himself; while another handmaid is busily kneading more cakes, unconscious of the din of her dame's tongue or the savour of the burning bread, for the whispering of a peasant youth who stands beside her shuts her senses to all else. The picture was regarded as a noble effort; yet so fearful was Wilkie of "critical dissection," that though satisfied with it himself, he withheld it from public exhibition till other works and increasing fame had rendered him less timorous.

His next picture comes closer in its subject to our own times and our own experience; this is The Rent Day, which he painted for his munificent friend the Earl of Mulgrave. We have seen that the Earl, aware, perhaps, of the waywardness of genius,

allowed the painter to choose his own subject; neither did he limit him in price, but gave him full range in both. In this he acted like one who knew the nature and the limits of art, and at all events felt that the man who could paint such scenes as The Village Politicians and The Blind Fiddler might be safely trusted in the selection of a fitting subject, on which some said, and more imagined his fame would depend. "We have seen artists paint a first good picture who never could paint a second; and we have seen artists paint a second who failed at a third, and were heard of no more:" such were the whisperings of those who disliked the sudden rise of one so young, or who believed that nothing permanently excellent could be produced save by men grown grey with study at home and abroad.

The image which The Rent Day gives of rustic life is perfect: that eventful period of reckoning is familiar, in its reality, to the mind of every husbandman, and to fancy by the aid of the muse. Had Wilkie been totally ignorant of griping landlords and stern factors, he might have learned enough for his picture from the lines of Burns:—

> "I've notic'd on our laird's court-day,
> And monie a time my heart's been wae,
> Poor tenant bodies scant o' cash,
> How they maun thole a factor's snash;
> He 'll stamp and threaten, curse and swear,
> He 'll apprehend them, poind their gear,
> While they maun stan' wi' aspect humble,
> And hear it a', and fear and tremble!"

The scene of the picture is the hall of the laird's house, and the persons in the drama are the factor

and the tenants; the former has no invitation in his looks to those who have not the full rent in their purses, and the latter seem to be a class who are drooping under the double pressure of "racked rents," and an exacting landlord. At one end of the hall stands a table, at which sits the steward amid papers and leases, receiving the rents, and at the other end stands another table, at which those who have their receipts in their pockets dine at their ease. Both tables are small, which may imply that the laird affords little room for meat and wine at his expense, and wishes to supply no grumbling farmer with space to spread out his lease, and appeal to its words from the dictum of the steward. Between these tables, and right in the middle of the hall, stand or sit, singly or in pairs, the farmers whose time to pay has not yet come; two are seated—one old, and bent, and coughing as though he would cough his last; and the other gnawing the head of his staff, sorely perplexed how to make forty pounds do the work of fifty. Two hale old men, with shrewd and calculating looks, stand behind the other pair: one, to secure the attention of the other, holds him by the button; and their talk is evidently of falling markets, rack-rents, and hard-hearted stewards. The like sentiments seem to pass through the mind of a modest and quiet young widow, who is seated more in the foreground, with one child at her foot, and another on her knee: her look speaks of a desolate heart and home; the key of her house-door is a plaything in the hands of her youngest child, who uses it as a coral. Behind her stands an old farmer, who

seems unskilful in arithmetic, whatever he may be in the proper rotation of crops; for he is summing up his rent on his fingers, and is evidently much puzzled with refractory fractions.

On the left hand of this group of tenantry stands the dinner table, round which are seated those who have already settled their rents. Three men and a woman are cutting their way into the roast beef, diving into the bowels of a pasty, and drinking, between every mouthful, with the avidity of hunger, and the desire to get as much as they can by way of luck-penny out of their avaricious landlord. A well-powdered butler is drawing corks with all his might, and marvelling, while he draws them, at the drought of the party, while a hungry dog sits licking its lips at every mouthful. On the right hand of the central group, a cheerful fire is burning in the chimney, and a fat roast (a barn-door fowl, perhaps), for the steward's own dinner, revolves in a tin screen: while on the soft rug beside it, with bosom turned to the warmth, lies a pug dog, a well-fed favourite, its eyes nearly grown up with fat. Here the painter has placed the chief group of the picture. With the back of his chair to the fire, the steward is seated; his official papers displayed at his feet, his right hand spread anxiously over a quantity of gold, his lips apart, and his eyes flashing in contradiction to a young husbandman, who is pleading the cause of a very old man, who stands a figure of silence and of patience, and endeavours to reclaim some of his rent, as due to him both in justice and mercy. It is quite plain that the steward rejects, with warmth, this in-

fraction of a signed and sealed agreement; while the resolute farmer, in honest anger, continues to insist. Another of the tenants, who has just paid his rent, seems to suspect that he has been overreached, and stands pondering, with a pen in his mouth, over a doubtful summary on the back of his lease. The whole picture awakens feelings of a painful nature. The farmers are all of that humble class who themselves hold the plough, and sow, and reap, and gather in their own fields, and may be set down as unskilful in figures, and unknowing in the law language of leases. On the other hand, the steward, with some smattering of law and some skill in arithmetic, domains it like a hawk over a brood of chickens, browbeats one, misleads another, and perhaps cheats the whole.

Of the merits of this fine picture, as a well-told story and a life-like representation of a scene familiar to two-thirds of the nation, almost all who saw it could judge, and with such the artist was safe. But there is a class of men whom original excellence itself cannot please, men who have no true judgment of their own, but who cry out for beauty such as that of Raphael in a picture, and sweetness such as that of Shakspeare in a poem, and refuse to admire all merit of a lower reach. Critics of this stamp fastened upon The Rent Day: they refused to see that it sought to move the heart by a fresh infusion of human nature into the story of the picture, and as the action was humble, academic beauty of form was undesirable and injurious. It was natural, they admitted, but nature was its fault; for as nature, as Fuseli said, put him out, so did it put out all artists who followed it close,

and copied it in its oddities, and with these they said this picture abounded. But they did not consider the question truly. In epic composition, and Raphael's is of that rank, perfect beauty and heroic dignity of shape and sentiment are indeed required; but the composition of Wilkie was not of epic but of the dramatic kind, which admitted the humours of Falstaff, and the follies of Dogberry and Verges, as readily as the lofty philosophy of Hamlet and the heroic despair of Macbeth.

The Rent Day was followed by a portrait of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, for the Earl of Mulgrave. It is true Wilkie felt that, though portraiture was of a domestic character, his strength did not lie in that direction; but he did not fail to see what Hogarth perceived before him, that the refreshing dews of patronage fall on this branch, leaving the other boughs of the great tree of art dry, and that all those who desired to live must condescend to seek their bread by ministering to the domestic taste—the amiable vanity of mankind. Neither did he fail to feel that while the heads in his Village Politicians, his Blind Fiddler, and his Rent Day, cost him invention and study, a portrait came ready-made in form, and hue, and sentiment, to his hand, and that he had, in copying it into his canvass, only to follow what was before him with taste and feeling, and his work was accomplished. In this spirit, Sir Joshua Reynolds complained that historic composition cost him too much —meaning that portraiture was the more lucrative of the two. It is likely that few of those, and they were many, who blamed Wilkie for stooping to portraiture,

would have been as abstemious in this as he was, or hungered and thirsted as he did in the high cause of dramatic painting.

With his father, whose health had been long on the decline, he maintained a very affectionate correspondence: he inquired with anxious minuteness into his condition, and communicated the opinions of various physicians whom he consulted with equal tenderness and delicacy. It is pleasing to trace in this correspondence the gradual rise of Wilkie in the estimation of the prudent folks of Fife. Inquiries after him were frequent in the public places. "A coach-full of ladies," says his father, "called at the Manse the day after you left us to see your pictures, and were much disappointed in missing you." To his mother, too, who, with a mother's tenderness, had accompanied him to Leith, when he set off for London, some attention was paid on her son's account, of which she was justly proud. "She was obliged," says her husband, "to Mr. William Johnston of Lathirsk, who met with her on the pier, paid her all attention across the Forth, and sent her safe to the Manse. I have also to inform you, that Lord Crawford died the other day at Rosset, in Ayrshire, whither he had been conveyed by his dependants, to his mother, to prevent his marriage with Miss ——, and will be interred next week in the family burying-ground. There has been a sad bustle to hinder his marriage, but it is now all over. Let us know what you are doing—how you are coming on; and be exceedingly careful of your health."

Though Wilkie had finished the Alfred and The

Rent Day, he sent neither of these fine pictures to the Exhibition of 1808, but, reserving them for some future occasion, trusted to The Card Players for increase of reputation. This picture was painted for the Duke of Gloucester, and is believed to have been suggested by him. It may be called a Reproof to Rustic Gambling, for the parties are humble, and the game is played in a room which, from its looks, may belong either to a cottage or an ale-house. Four men of very dissimilar characters are busied in the game: one, at the head of the table, may pass for the knowing landlord, if the scene is a change-house, and for a shrewd well-fed peasant, if the scene is in a cottage. His night-cap, a sort of bonnet-rouge, is thrown back on his brow; the apron string scarce restrains his swelling rotundity from encroaching on the table, while his round oily face is radiant with joy at his success in the game, and his whole frame shakes with internal merriment. The open laughter which he subdues breaks out in a loud and gaping *guffaw*, as the Scotch word it, in his partner, who, if not his son, seems of the same make and mould, and displays the ten of hearts, ready to lay on the other's ace, with a rustic joy which knows no bounds. On the other side sits an upright, demure, and grim old man, who may have been a soldier, and, as such, endures defeat without change of countenance, and seems by his looks resolved to try another chance: it is otherwise with his partner, who, seated with his back to the foreground of the picture, on beholding this turn of fortune, seems uneasy over all his body, and scratches behind his ear mechanically, as if to arouse thought and kindle in-

vention. Over the back of the chair of the laugher leans a contemplative on-looker, who keeps his composure, as though he did not observe that the game lay in the hand into which he was looking; while, facing the foreground, stands a young woman with a child in her arms, evidently come out of an adjoining room to see the cause of the laughter, and is looking anxiously on the table to see how the game is going.

The merit of the picture resides in the force with which the various characters are delineated, in the skilful arrangement of the group, and the vicissitudes of fortune visible in the players. Scotland is stamped less legibly on this than on any other of Wilkie's preceding pictures. It is, in both animate and inanimate things, essentially English, and belongs more to London than to the provinces. The colouring is cold and clear. Though not looked upon with the rapture with which The Village Politicians and The Blind Fiddler were regarded in the Exhibition, the natural ease and the unborrowed character of the scene made a favourable impression; while others, who thought it a shade below those works, said little; for it was generally said that his Rent Day equalled or surpassed any picture he had hitherto painted, and that such was the opinion of all who admired nature and originality.*

In the following letter he sets the public right respecting the liberality of the Duke of Gloucester.

* A sketch, with variations, of this picture, is in the possession of Mr. Howard, R.A. A black man is introduced as an on-looker of the game, and adds much to the merit of the work. The original picture is now in the collection of Charles Bredel, Esq.

They had taxed him with parsimony, not aware that his Royal Highness had augmented the original price from fifty to one hundred and fifty guineas.

TO THE REV. JAMES LISTER.

Since I saw you last I have finished what I was then proposing to begin, the *Group of Card Players*, the only picture I have in the Exhibition. It was painted for his Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester, who has behaved to me in the most handsome and liberal manner. When the commission was given, the stated price was fifty guineas; which, when the picture was finished, his Royal Highness conceiving to be a great deal too little, most generously asked me to accept of a hundred guineas in addition to the stipulated sum.

I have now advanced another picture a great way towards completion, the subject of which is *A Sick Lady visited by her Physician;* but as I have felt the inconvenience of painting a picture for a particular person, or for a stated price, I intend to keep this one completely disengaged till it is finished, when I will dispose of it in the way that shall be the most to my advantage.

D. W.

Wilkie now felt that his works had taken a strong hold on the public taste: he heard on all sides words of admiration and praise, and received proofs of his country's approbation in commissions for new pictures, and copies of old; while many, who were unable to obtain these, desired to possess what artists

call their first, or second, or third thoughts, and others wrangled to get favourite groups and detached figures. For these his prices were so moderate at all times, that even northern admirers were astonished at his charges. When John Clerk, afterwards Lord Eldin, a painter as well as a wit and a lawyer, desired in 1822 to place in his collection a sketch of the Waterloo Gazette, the artist immediately complied with his wish, and sent him a finished study of such rare excellence, and at a price so humble, that the other, in showing it to Andrew Wilson, asked in a tone of surprise, "What do you think your friend asks for that picture? You will guess much beyond the sum—only fifty pounds. I am sure I am much obliged, and have written to the admirable artist to express my thanks."

Wilkie had hitherto entrusted his engagements and conversations on art to a retentive memory: he now resolved to commit them to the safer keeping of ink and paper, and accordingly began to make a series of memoranda, in which he not only inserted the orders which he received for pictures, but the visits which were made to his studies, the conversations between himself and the most memorable of his visiters, and the progress which he made in his works. The accuracy of his taste in art is not more remarkable than it appears to be in men and manners: portions of this curious book will enliven and relieve the monotony of my narrative.

JOURNAL.

"*May* 1st, 1808.—Had the honour of a call from Lord Egremont, who gave me a commission to paint him a picture. Met Mr. Harlow, the portrait painter, at dinner.—2d, Went to the Admiralty with the picture of The Rent Day; saw Lord and Lady Mulgrave. Mr. Haydon came in while I was there; went with him to Mr. Rogers' to see his pictures—the Titian and the Reynolds very fine. Went to the Royal Academy, to the opening of the Exhibition; met with many artists; dined afterwards with Farrington, where I met with a very agreeable party of painters.—3d, Called on Sir Francis Bourgeois, who informed me that the Duke of Gloucester had resolved to give me 100 guineas for my picture, in addition to the fifty I had already received; went afterwards with Cleghorn and Mrs. Clarke to Brook-Green fair, where I was much amused with the variety of characters which it exhibited.—5th, Painted from 11 to 4 o'clock; had a call from Mr. Samuel Dobree of Walthamstow; received a note from a gentleman unknown, proposing an amendment in my picture (The Card Players) in the Exhibition.—6th, Painted from 10 till 3, during which time I was visited by Haydon and Rogers; had a call from Lord and Lady Lansdowne, and also from Thomas Hope.—7th, Had a call from Jackson; went with him to see Loutherbourg's picture of the Battle of Maida, which, if not in every respect a fine work, is said to be at least a good representation of a battle; came home, and painted from 11 till 4; went to the play, and was much gra-

tified by the representation of the Fashionable Lovers of Cumberland.—8th, Had Jackson and Haydon to breakfast; went with the latter to church, where we had a charity sermon from Sydney Smith; returned, and was honoured by a call from Lord Mulgrave and Captain Morison; dined with Haydon at the Nassau Coffee-house.—9th, Painted from 10 till 4 (at The Jew's Harp).—10th, Went to breakfast with Mr. Stodart of Golden Square; accompanied Seguier to the Admiralty to varnish the picture of The Rent Day; met Lord Mulgrave, and accompanied his Lordship and Seguier to Christie's to see some pictures; came home and painted from 1 till 3½, in which time I finished the little dog in my picture of The Jew's Harp. A letter came from a Mr. Stewart requesting me to take him as a pupil and companion into my house.—11th, Called on Mr. Wells, to return to him the Ostade he lent me; looked at some new pictures he has lately got; called on Mulready on my way home. Painted from 1 till after 4, in which time I almost finished the drawers, in my picture of The Sick Lady. Had a call from the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne and one of their daughters; invited to dine at Lansdowne House on Monday.—11th, Dined at Charles's, and, with Haydon, called on Leigh Hunt.—12th, Had a call from Mr. Uvedale Price, and answered Roberts' letter; painted from 10 till 4; took home Ridley Colborne's Ostade and Teniers.—13th, Had a call from J. Stewart and Mr. Annesley, who reminded me of my promise to paint him a picture; went afterwards to the Exhibition. *Mem.* That my picture there wants a much stronger light on the principal

group.—15th, Went to church, where I met Haydon; home, and found Andrew Wilson, who accompanied me on my way to Clapton, to call on Samuel Dobree, who received me very kindly, and introduced me to his family. Saw his pictures; dined with him; and, after spending a very pleasant evening, came away at seven, and was accompanied by him and one of his sons for two miles on my way home. He gave me a catalogue of the first year's Exhibition of the Royal Academy, which I shall keep as a great curiosity.—16th, Painted from 11 till 1. Dined at Lord Lansdowne's, where I met Peter Coxe and Mr. Bowles; went at 9 to Mr. Neate's musical party, where I heard some of Haydn's music performed in a fine style on the violin.—17th, Had a call from Jackson; painted from 11 till 4. Called on Mr. Haydon, and saw his picture; thought the head he had done too large in proportion. Had a note from John Campbell, requesting me to paint his father's portrait, who is at present in town.—18th, Had a call from Haydon and Jackson; painted on the picture of The Sick Lady from 10 till 4. Glazed a little in the back-ground, and finished the old lady's gown. Constable came, and stood for his portrait till 10 o'clock.—19th, Met Mr. Annesley at the British Museum, and was much gratified by the sight of the Townley Statues. Went to Turner's gallery, and admired some of his pictures very much.—20th, Called at Mr. Hope's; got a ticket of admission to his house, which I left at Mr. Stodart's. Painted from 11 till 4. Had a call from Dr. Campbell of Cupar; engaged him to come on Monday, when I propose to make a sketch of his head. Had

a call from the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne and two of their daughters; was requested to paint a portrait in whole length of the Marchioness; told his Lordship I would consider about it. Had Newton, Jackson, and Constable at tea and supper.—21st, Went to Sir George Beaumont's; saw Lady Beaumont and Sir George; was invited to dine with them on Tuesday next. Went to Haydon's to take him to Angerstein's; was detained by him a whole hour in dressing; was delighted with that select and choice collection. Called with Newton on Sir William Beechey; we were detained by him for some time; orpiment at present his favourite colour; came home, and found an invitation to dine with Lord Mulgrave on Monday; spent the evening in reading and writing.—22d, Went with Haydon to church, and heard a most delightful sermon from Sydney Smith; called on Hoppner, and saw several of the family; called on Fuseli, and was kindly received by him; went back to dine with Hoppner, but had not the pleasure of his company.—23d, Took a walk before breakfast; had a call from Dr. Campbell, and began a sketch of his head. Painted from 1 till 4, and finished the table in my picture of The Sick Lady; dressed at 5, and went with Haydon and Seguier to dinner with Lord Mulgrave; met there General Phipps; saw the pictures which his Lordship had lately bought; they are very fine.—24th, Went to Squibbs to see some pictures on view for sale by Peter Coxe; saw Lord Mulgrave there. Home, and painted from 12 till 4; finished the table and the green cloth in The Sick Lady; went to Sir George Beaumont's to dinner;

met there General Phipps, Coleridge, and Dr. Bell.—25th, Took a walk before breakfast; painted from 10 till 1; Dr. Campbell sat for his portrait one hour. Went with Newton to Hope's collection and the Stafford Gallery.—26th, Painted from 10 till 4. Went with Marshall to Sadler's Wells, where we were much amused with a pantomime, in which Grimaldi played the clown.—27th, Painted from 10 till 4, in which time I had a call from Miss Stodart, requesting me to be of their party on Monday to go to Hope's gallery. Had a letter from Mr. Chalmers authorising me to dispose of the copyright of his works. Painted to-day for six hours, and finished a large portion of the carpet in my picture of The Sick Lady.—28th, Dr. Campbell sat two hours for his portrait; painted with but little interruption at my picture from 1 till 4; got a good way on with the carpet.—29th, Had Geddes and Haydon to breakfast with me; went with Haydon and called on Sir William Beechey, Mr. Edridge, and Mr. Hoppner. Met Mrs. Stodart and her family in Kensington Gardens, and accompanied them home to Brompton.—30th, Had a call from Jackson; painted from 10 to 12; went to Hope's gallery with Mrs. Stodart and her two daughters; went with them also to see Loutherbourg's picture, and to West's Gallery, where we met Mr. Annesley; a number of friends in the evening and a dance.—31st, Stood with Seguier two hours looking at Lord Radstock's pictures; wrote a letter to Mr. Chalmers, also a letter to my friend Graham in Edinburgh."

These passages lift him out a little from the life of

the artist in London—an hour's stroll in the morning, to breathe the fresh air and seek for health; once or twice a month a dinner or two at the tables of noblemen or gentlemen who love painting, and patronise its professors; a visit now and then to the principal galleries of pictures, to see, perhaps, how the chiefs of the calling have acquitted themselves, or to point out their merits to the friends who accompany him; and five hours a day bestowed on professional labour, during which time the mind is on the stretch to infuse becoming thought; the eye on the watch to see that the colour is natural and the character true, and the hand steadying itself to execute those artless yet studied strokes and touches which are looked for from eminent masters:—so passes time with him, in London; and it is much the same every where. Haydon and Jackson, it will have been observed, were at this time the chief companions of Wilkie among the artists; the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Earl of Mulgrave, and Sir George Beaumont, his principal patrons among the titled, while of men of distinction in literature the since celebrated Dr. Chalmers was his correspondent. Before I lay all the pages of another month of the Journal before my readers, the list of eminent men will be extended.

JOURNAL — *continued.*

"*June* 1st, Painted from 10 till 3, on the background of my picture of The Sick Lady.—2d, Painted from 10 till 3; glazed some parts of my picture; had a call from Sir George and Lady Beaumont, Lord

Mulgrave, and the Hon. Mr. Phipps; went to a rout at Mrs. Baillie's, where I met several friends. — 3d, Painted from 10 till 4. — 8th, Called on Mr. Murray in Fleet Street, who promised to give me an answer respecting Mr. Chalmers' book in a day or two; dined at Sir George Beaumont's, where I met Coleridge the poet. — 9th, Painted from 10 till 4; had a call from Mr. West and from Mr. Jackson, also from Lord and Lady Lansdowne and one of their daughters; Lady L. seemed very anxious to have the picture of The Sick Lady; they invited me to come down to them at Southampton in the summer; dined at Dr. Baillie's, where I met with the Miss Baillies, Mr. and Mrs. Coxe, and Dr. Warren. — 10th, Went with Haydon to Lord Grosvenor's gallery; was much pleased with the pictures and the house; came home, and painted for an hour; had a call from Lord and Lady Spencer; went to Andrew Robertson, and sat an hour for my portrait; returned home and went to Hoppner's, where there was a very pleasant dance; came away at three in the morning. — 11th, Painted from 11 till 2; had a call from Newton, and dined at Charles's with Haydon, and was much pleased with a review which he showed me of his first picture. — 12th, Went with Jackson to breakfast with Liston, who introduced me to Mr. and Mrs. Pope. — 13th, Had a walk before breakfast; painted from 10 till 4. — 14th, Had a walk before breakfast; painted from 10 till 4; had a call from Mr. Mundy, member of parliament for Derbyshire, who gave me a commission for a picture; had a walk with Mr. and Mrs. Jackson. — 15th, Painted from 10 till 4; had a call

from Robert Gourlay, of Bath, on his way to Scotland, and accompanied Constable to the Exhibition of the Royal Academy.—16th, Painted from 10 till 2; went over some of the back-ground of my picture; had a letter from Captain Drummond, secretary to the Thistle Club, informing me that I was elected a member at last meeting; called at Mr. Murray's, and found that he had made no offer for Mr. Chalmers's work; went to Matthew Stodart's to supper.—17th, Painted from 10 till 4. Had a call from Meyer, who said he was willing to engrave the portrait of Lady Mary Fitzgerald for forty-one guineas at full length, and for twenty-five at half length. Sat for my portrait at Robertson's till 8 o'clock.—18th, Went to Miller's, who told me he would look at Chalmers's work, and give me his advice about the proper mode of proceeding with it. Painted from 10 till 4; had a call from Mulready, and afterwards from Lord Mulgrave; his Lordship said he should have no objection to Meyer's engraving the portrait of Lady Mary Fitzgerald, but that it was more to gratify her friends than himself that he wished it done; he had no doubt that the plate would sell generally. Went to the Haymarket Theatre, and was much gratified with the acting of Liston and Mathews, in Colman's Heir-at-Law.—19th, Hoppner and Haydon came to breakfast; went to church with them; saw Mrs. Opie there. Went with Mr. Bowles to Lord Elgin's, where I saw Sir George and Lady Beaumont. Dined at John O'Groat's with Haydon; went home with him, and were joined by Howard, Constable, and Hoppner.—20th, Painted from 10 till 4; had a

call from Dr. Playfair; also from Geddes and Burnet; met Constable; went to the Royal Academy, and brought away my picture of The Card Players.—21st, called on Sir F. Bourgeois, and afterwards at Mr. Reinagle's. Came home and dressed; Sir Francis's carriage called for me and the picture of The Card Players, and after taking Sir Francis up at his own house, conveyed us to the Duke of Gloucester's, where, after waiting some time, I had the pleasure of seeing his Royal Highness, and of being paid the hundred guineas which he had promised me in addition to the stipulated price of the picture. Went with Sir Francis to Mr. Squibb's, and saw some very fine suits of armour, a number of pictures, swords, and articles of furniture. Home, and had a call from Sir George Beaumont, who asked me to come and see him at his seat in the country in the autumn.—22d, Had a sitter during two hours for the morning gown in the picture of The Sick Lady, and finished it. Burnet and Geddes to supper.—23d, To Miller's after breakfast; but got little encouragement for Chalmers's work. Painted from 12 to 5; put in a piece of drapery at the table on the right-hand side of my picture. Had a call from Sir George and Lady Beaumont, and an invitation to dine with them in the evening; met there Lord and Lady Mulgrave. Had a note from Dr. Thomson, inviting me to go with him into Kent on Wednesday or Thursday.—24th, Called on Stothard, the academician, and saw several of his pictures. Came home, and painted from 12 till 4; and finished the hat and table on the right-hand side of my picture; took a walk with Constable.—25th, Went

to Haydon's, and sat to him for one of the hands in his picture for nearly two hours. Went to Longman and Rees, and proposed that they should purchase the copyright of Chalmers' work; was told by them that till it was noticed by the reviews there was little chance of the book selling. Went to the Haymarket Theatre; saw Mathews act Sir Fretful Plagiary, with which I was highly delighted.—26th, Howard and Haydon came to breakfast with me. Called on Mrs. Opie; conversed with her; she said she had lately published some works, which I intend to buy. Came home, and wrote part of a letter to Chalmers. Went with my brother and Haydon to dine at John O'Groat's, and met Geddes and Burnet. Called on Meyer, and was told by a servant from the window that he was not at home.—27th, Had a walk before breakfast; painted from 10 till 4 at a number of little places in my picture, which has almost finished it. Wrote to Chalmers, to tell him of my bad success with his work; had a call from Jackson.—28th, Accompanied Dr. Thomson into the country; went through Greenwich, over Blackheath, and halted at Shooter's Hill; walked to the Telegraph, and to a tower built by an officer of the name of James, in commemoration of some event in India. Went to Cobham, Dr. Thomson's residence, where we dined with some young ladies.—29th, After breakfast, Dr. Thomson was so kind as to take me to Lord Darnley's, at Cobham Hall, where I admired the splendour of the house and the richness of the picture gallery; saw a picture of Titian by himself—very fine; a large picture by Rubens, with many figures, and the Samuel

of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which certainly kept its place, notwithstanding the fame of its competitors. Saw Lord and Lady Darnley, to whom I had been formerly introduced; dined, and took a walk in the evening with the young ladies.—30th, Accompanied Miss Thomson to the top of a neighbouring hill; returned, and dined; had a game at trap and ball, and shot at a mark with bows and arrows; Miss Thomson brought me the present of a box full of colours from Mrs. Muskett, a great amateur in the art of painting.

"*July* 1st, Went to look at the fortifications on the hill to the south of Chatham; on our way to Rochester we went over the celebrated Gad's Hill of Shakspeare. —2d, Put my painting materials in order, and set to work on a sketch of Dr. Thomson, which occupied me till one o'clock.—3d, Went to church, and had the pleasure of hearing performed, in the middle of the service, Handel's *Te Deum*, which had a very grand effect; had an excellent sermon from Dr. Thomson.—4th, Began in the morning to make a sketch of Miss Thomson; and after breakfast began a sketch of Mrs. Thomson, on the same board with the Doctor, and finished them both before dinner-time; had a dance after supper.—5th, Finished the sketch of Miss Thomson at 1 o'clock; went afterwards and looked at the church, to see if it was a fit subject for a sketch; it failed to satisfy me; I liked a neighbouring cottage better, and fixed upon taking an inside view of it, and began to make a sketch of it after dinner; walked with the young ladies, and heard some of Handel's music after supper.—6th,

Resumed my labours on the interior of the cottage after breakfast, and wrought from 10 till 3, during which time I was visited by all the family in succession. On finishing the sketch, I came home to dinner; then with the young ladies to a hill top in the neighbourhood—a pleasant walk.—7th, Parted with this very delightful family with some reluctance. I got home to my lodgings the same evening, and found that very few people had called for me during my absence.—8th, Called on Haydon, and found him recovering from a fever of which he had fallen ill in my absence. Homeward, and began glazing at my picture; I kept altering and glazing at various parts of my picture till 4 o'clock. Had a call from Mr. Creighton, of the Fife Militia, on his way to Scotland. Went with him to Sadler's Wells, where we saw a new pantomime. Stopped on our way back at Bagnigge Wells, where we saw Jews and Jewesses dancing to the tune of the Fairy Dance.—10th, Called at Charles Bell's and at Robertson's.—11th, Haydon breakfasted with me, and made some remarks on my picture. Painted from 11 till 2. Had a call from A. Carlisle, who made some critical observations on the work. Sent a recommendation from Lord Mulgrave to the Committee of the British Gallery for a ticket of admission. Met Mr. and Mrs. Dance, with whom I was much pleased.—12th, Painted from 10 till 4, and made several alterations in my picture of The Sick Lady. Read in the papers the good news from Spain. Seguier called and made various observations on my picture. He varnished for me The Village Politicians and the sketch of Miss Phipps.—

13th, Had a call from Mr. Goldsmith; painted and made some alterations in my picture; then went to Lord Stafford's; met there Seguier and Haydon, and had some talk about the merits of the pictures. Dined afterwards with Mr. Goldsmith, where I met Callcott, and spent a very pleasant evening.—14th, Painted from 10 till 4. Had the measure taken of my picture for a frame; and a letter came from my father, in which he mentions the attentions he had received from Lady Crawford. Made some alterations in my picture. Went to the Royal Academy, where I found the living figure sitting, and Robertson, Constable, and others, painting from her.—15th, Painted from 12 till 4. Had a call from Burnet, with whom I consulted about the picture for his engraving. Went to the Academy, and began from the living model on a piece of milled board.—16th, Painted from 10 till 3, in which I put the bird-cage into the corner of the picture of The Sick Lady, with a cloth over it, as if to prevent the bird from disturbing her with its song. Went to the Royal Academy, and did a good deal to the sketch from the life model.—17th, Sat to Robertson for an hour before breakfast for my picture; had a call from a Mr. L., who disgusted me by his fulsome flattery; sat again for my picture to Mr. Robertson.—18th, Painted from 10 till 3, and finished my picture of The Sick Lady, which has occupied me altogether about four months. Went to the Royal Academy, and completed my sketch from the female model.—19th, Called at the Admiralty, and found that Lord Mulgrave had gone from home; called on Burnet; went to the Royal Academy, and began a new

drawing from Sam Strowager*, and laid it all in; Jackson came home with me, and sat some time.—20th, Began the sketch of my picture of The Jew's Harp, which I almost finished by 4 o'clock: went to the Thistle Club, where I met Carstairs, and other members, and spent a pleasant evening.—21st, Had a walk before breakfast: painted from 11 till 3: was principally employed making some amendments in the picture of The Sick Lady, which I think have improved it. Went to the Academy, where I continued painting from the naked figure till 7 o'clock. Off to Haydon's, whom I was lucky enough to find at home: had a note requesting me to send Lord Mansfield's picture home as soon as convenient.—22d, Walk before breakfast, painted a little in the forepart of the day: to the Admiralty, and saw Lord and Lady Mulgrave, and showed them a small sketch of the picture I had begun, which they seemed to like. Went to the Royal Academy, and came home with Constable, and—23d, Walked before breakfast; then began the picture of The Jew's Harp. Had a call from Haydon, and Burnet, and Newton. Went with my picture in a coach to Lord Mansfield's; Burnet accompanied me. Called on Reinagle on my way home, who made me a present of some French brushes; home, and painted on The Jew's Harp till I had it all in, and then went to the Royal Academy.—24th, Wrote to my father; had a call from Jackson; also from Reinagle to see my picture. Took a walk to see Bacon's statue of King William in St. James's

* The man model at the Academy. I am not sure that Wilkie spells his name correctly.

Square.—25th, Called at Flaxman's, but did not find him at home; painted from 11 till 3; went over some part of the physician's head in The Sick Lady, and drew a hand for my next picture. Went to the Academy, and finished my drawing from Sam Strowager.—26th, Painted from 10 till 3; did a little to the physician's head; and put in the hand of the man playing on the Jew's Harp, in the picture I have begun. Had a call in the middle of the day from Mr. Callcott, who sat with me for some time. Went to dine at M's., where I met ten people I knew nothing of, which made the entertainment very unpleasant to me.—27th, Went out to buy a Jew's harp; on returning met Raimbach the engraver, who came to see the picture I had begun. Went to the Royal Academy, and began a study from the figure.—28th, Painted from 10 till 3; did a good deal to the man playing on the Jew's harp. Had a note from Mr. Clarke asking me to meet Flaxman at his house to-morrow evening. Went to the Royal Academy, and wrought on the figure I had begun last night; accompanied Jackson to the Council Room, where I was much gratified with the pictures of Sir Joshua Reynolds, particularly with the portrait of himself.—29th, Met in my morning's walk with Turnerelli, a sculptor, who invited me to call upon him. Painted from 10 till 3; put in the hand of the boy in my picture; went in the evening to Mr. Clarke's, where I had the pleasure of meeting Flaxman.—30th, On my way back from Liston's I saw a dog, which being suitable for my picture, I agreed with the man to whom it belonged to send it to me with a person to

sit—which he did, and I was lucky enough to pencil it in in an hour: this, with the sleeve of the boy, was all I got done to-day in The Jew's Harp.—31st, Hoppner and Constable came to breakfast: I went to church, and heard a very good sermon.

"*Aug.* 1st, Painted from 11 till 3; had a call from John Campbell; afterwards went to the Academy.—2d, Went to Robertson's to breakfast; sat to him a considerable time for my miniature; to the Academy, where I proceeded with my study, and afterwards accompanied Jackson, Constable, and Seguier to the Haymarket Theatre.—3d, Found myself too indisposed to go to Robertson as I promised; painted a little, and continued at home; to amuse myself, began to make a blot of The Public House Door, the subject I intend to paint next; took a walk, and went early to bed.—4th, Was rather better; painted the usual time; Jackson called; I walked out with the intention of going to the Academy, this being the first night of the figure, but found myself too weak for the attempt, and was obliged to return; began to paint again at the sketch I had begun last night.—5th, Much better to-day; began to paint at 11 and continued to 4; had a call from Mr. Repton, who made some just observations on my picture; painted a little between 6 and 7, when Jackson called, when we had a walk together.—6th, Painted from breakfast-time till 5 o'clock, and put some things into the background of my picture of The Jew's Harp. Took a walk, and when I returned found that Jackson had called, and left me the sketch of Sir Joshua's portrait of himself, which I have learned much from.—7th,

Jackson came to breakfast, and we proposed a number of alterations in both of my pictures; we went and called on Northcote, who came to us after we had remained a long while in his drawing-room.—8th, Walked before breakfast; painted from 10 till 4, and finished several parts of my little picture of The Jew's Harp; went with Jackson to the Haymarket Theatre to see Colman's new piece of the Africans, with which I was much pleased, but think the story too violent to interest the world long.—9th, Was surprised by a call from Haydon, whom I believed to be at Dover; I had also a call from Lord Mulgrave. Painted from 11 till 4 on some of the subordinate parts of The Jew's Harp; went to the Academy, expecting a new figure in the life—not till the 11th. A card of invitation came from Lord Mulgrave, asking me to dinner on Thursday.—10th, Was invited by Dr. Pitcairn to spend a few days with him in Kent; went to the Academy, where I saw Sir Francis Bourgeois; returned with Constable and called at Haydon's, but did not find him at home.—11th, Went to breakfast with Robertson, who began another portrait of me on a larger scale in the Scottish dress. Returned, and began some alterations in my picture of The Sick Lady. Dressed, and dined at the Admiralty; and, after spending a very pleasant evening with Lord and Lady Mulgrave, came away with Haydon.—12th, Had a walk before breakfast; painted till 3, and made some alterations in my picture of the Sick Lady.—13th, Sat with Robertson for my miniature from 9 till 2; accompanied Constable to the Academy; went on with my figure, and finished the

hand. Haydon called me out to tell me that Seguier desired my company at breakfast to-morrow morning. —14th, Went with Jackson to breakfast at Seguier's, where we found Haydon; we all repaired to Robertson's, where I sat from 11 till 2 for my portrait.—15th, Went to Robertson's, and sat for my picture; during which time Coxe came in, and would not speak to me, because I had not dined with him yesterday: he began, however, to change his mind, and we became quite friendly by the time we parted. Came home, and began to paint on my picture of The Sick Lady. Had a call from Burnet, with whom I came to an agreement respecting the engraving of my picture of The Jew's Harp. Went to Haydon's in the evening, where I met Leigh Hunt, with whom I spent a pleasant evening. — 16th, Had a walk before breakfast; began to paint at 10 and continued till 2, and then went out with Jackson, and called on Constable, who came home with me to supper. — 17th, Began, after my morning walk, to paint, and continued till 2. Had calls from Thomas Hope, Ridley Colborne, and Dr. Pitcairn. Consented to go with the latter, at 2 o'clock to-morrow, to his house in Kent. Went to the Academy; called with Constable at Seguier's; thence to Coventry Street, to buy a portmanteau for my visit. — 18th, Altered the right hand of the man playing on the Jew's harp: then in a coach to Dr. Pitcairn's, with whom I enjoyed a pleasant drive to Dartford: walked in his grounds, and enjoyed the place and people much. — 19th, Dr. Pitcairn took me through Dartford, to the seat of Lord Audley on the banks of the Thames: the house had many pictures;

those by Rubens, Teniers, Paul Veronese, and Murillo really surprised me: we staid more than an hour, during which time I made some slight sketches, as memorandums for the picture. — 20th, Called on Sir John Dyke, and saw some old family pictures, and visited the chapel, which is one of the finest country churches I ever saw. — 22d, Yesterday I went to church; and to-day sketched some old trees and the house. — 23d, Made a sketch of some of the out-houses; went to Stone, and saw the church, a fine piece of Gothic work. Returned through Dartford-Brent, where the people were all met to play a game of cricket; dined with about seventy of the players and on-lookers in a large tent; then set off for London, and reached my lodgings in the evening."

CHAPTER VII.

WILKIE AT SOUTHAMPTON WITH LORD AND LADY LANSDOWNE. — EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL. — PAINTS "THE SICK LADY," "THE JEW'S HARP," AND "THE CUT FINGER."— JOURNAL CONTINUED. — ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION OF 1809.

WILKIE painted in general five hours each day; made many changes in his pictures; received with deference the counsel of his brethren, of whom Haydon and Jackson were the chief; and made, bit by bit, approaches to excellence in those finer sensibilities of expression, of which his picture of The Sick Lady is an example. During all this period he studied in the Academy with the diligence of an unpractised student, was punctual in his attendance, and, it is said, was often reproached by the more quicksilvery of his comrades for turning elegant pleasure into toil and drudgery. To these unwise counsellors he replied with a smile or a shrug, or a pithy Scotch saying, of which he had good store, and continued to study on, adding, as he observed, something every day to his stock of knowledge, and amassing intelligence for future use. He turned every thing to account in nature: a peculiar turn of the head; a particular motion of the body; a face in which he beheld something nationally true either in beauty or expression, were treasured in his memory or his sketch-book; and I have heard him say, that he never saw a dog basking itself

in the sun at a cottage door, but he saw at the same time its mistress or its master resting themselves within in the same manner. While other artists contented themselves with studying their art through pictures, and rejoiced to think they had imitated with success the brilliant colouring of Reynolds, or caught a little of the graceful grandeur of Raphael, Wilkie, without neglecting the dead, loved rather to seek for something new in the living. He regarded nature as a vast academy, and the varied forms with which it was peopled as figures with whom he had to form new combinations and awaken new sensibilities. Having, after his return from his little excursion into Kent, finished the picture of The Sick Lady to his mind, bestowed several long sittings on Andrew Robertson for his two miniatures, of which the one in a broad blue bonnet is the best, and arranged with Burnet for the engraving of The Jew's Harp, he prepared for his visit to the Marquis of Lansdowne at Southampton.

It will be remembered that the late Marquis shared in some of the fine taste of his half-brother, the present Lord Lansdowne; nor can it be forgotten that he was odd, though stately, in his manners—that he deserted the beautiful Bowood, fitted up a whimsical residence in the old crumbling castle of Southampton, and maintained a sort of eccentric elegance, in which he imagined that he revived the splendour of the old Saxon and Danish sea kings, who had dwelt there of old. There was much in this to please the politest fancy; the walls of the castle were washed by the tide; the windows looked upon that fine sheet of

water which lies so calm between the coast of Hampshire and the beautiful Isle of Wight; and when the Marquis, in a moonlight evening, spread the sail of his splendid yacht, and with his lady and train moved into the bosom of the bay, he had not much to do to imagine himself an earl in the train of Rollo or of Hastings. Be that as it may, he desired to possess the picture of The Sick Lady, something in which reminded him of a circumstance in his own history; and also wished to have a portrait of his lady from the same hand; and to afford Wilkie full time for the latter, he was invited to the hospitalities of the castle of Southampton. Wilkie's visit and his doings there are recorded by his own pen.

JOURNAL.

"*September* 1st, Started in the coach from the White Horse Cellar at 5 in the morning; breakfasted in an inn beyond Hounslow Heath; dined at Winchester; reached Southampton at 6 o'clock, and put up at the Star Inn. In upwards of seventy miles of road I met with no incidents, and saw little cultivated country. Winchester is a respectable looking town, with a college and a cathedral: the appearance is venerable.—2d, Had breakfast and walked to the Castle, and saw Lord and Lady Lansdowne; found Chalon there, who was painting some of the family, and was introduced to him for the first time; thought him a good sort of man, and likely to be an agreeable companion. The Marchioness was however engaged, and could not sit then; I began the sketch, however,

which occupied me the whole day. Returned to the Star Inn, where I resolved to remain during my stay; dressed at 6, and went to the Castle to dinner, where I met a Mr. Stewart, a Scotchman: went with Lord Lansdowne and family to the play, and saw Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kemble in a very pleasing little piece, which amused us greatly.—3d, After breakfast called on Chalon, and accompanied him to the Castle, where we began to paint, and had the good fortune to obtain a sitting of Lady Lansdowne for more than two hours, during which time some of her visiters were admitted. Continued painting till 5; being asked to dine at the Castle, dressed at the inn and returned; found at table a stranger—a learned man, and willing to display his knowledge—he was very amusing. Went to the drawing-room, and began looking over Flaxman's designs.—4th, Chalon called, and went with me to the Castle; we afterwards crossed the ferry; met a gentleman, who told us of a great victory gained over the French by Sir A. Wellesley; walked to Netley Abbey, a noble ruin. Returned at 4 to the inn, and found an invitation to dine at the Castle; went at 6, and saw the lord and lady arrive from a pleasure sail; dined, and remained late, allured by music.—5th, Prepared for commencing the portrait; Chalon arrived, and we sent up word to her ladyship requesting her to come down: about 1 o'clock she came and sat till 5, during which time I wrought at the portrait, and she amused us with anecdotes; but I found her talking did not help me on with the picture, and I did not succeed so well with the head as I hoped. I returned to the Star and dressed, then back to the

Castle to dinner; then up to the drawing-room with Chalon, where we spent an agreeable hour with her ladyship and daughters.—6th, Had a walk in the morning along the beach; then went to the Castle, prepared my materials, and sent up to her ladyship requesting her attendance: she came at once, and was so kind as to sit for three hours, in which time I went completely over the face and made it better. After dinner went to the drawing-room, and had an account from her ladyship of all she had seen in Paris: we began drawing sketches and caricatures of the young ladies.—7th, Went to the Castle; her ladyship came down, and as she was dressed I began to paint the neck and breast which I finished by 2 o'clock. While at dinner in the Castle a letter came from my brother, brought by his servant: wrote requesting him to come and see me at Southampton.—8th, To the Castle, and painted in Lady Lansdowne's right hand and finished the bonnet, though interrupted by several visiters. Returned to the Star, where a note came from the Marchioness saying she was sorry there was too little room to accommodate me at dinner to-day, but she hoped to see me in the evening: went accordingly: saw a good deal of company and had a dance.—9th, Began to paint at eleven and continued till half-past four: put in the hand of the boy and the coffee equipage which he holds. I also sketched a window in the background instead of the door: while employed I had occasional visits from the family and the visiters. Was invited to dinner.—10th, Took a morning walk: went to the Castle and began to paint; put in the coffee-pot in the back-

ground and some of the jewels in the lady's dress.—11th, Had a walk before breakfast: after breakfast, to my surprise, my brother came into the room: he had just arrived from Portsmouth: we took a long walk together. Returned and found an invitation to dine at the Castle; answered that my brother had come to see me, and begged to be excused.—12th, Took my brother to the Castle to show him the picture of the Marchioness; returned with him to the Star, and saw him off for Portsmouth. The Marchioness, when I came back, sat for an hour, and I put in the hand holding the cup; and after she was gone I painted the velvet gown, which I all but finished by 5 o'clock. A violent storm of thunder and lightning and rain came on in the evening while we were in the drawing-room.—13th, Went to the Castle and began to paint; was interrupted by two gentlemen whom Lord Lansdowne brought into the room, one of them was the Marquis of Worcester. When they were gone I painted the coffee-cup, and put in the lace cloak; both looked tolerably well, and I expect to be able to finish all that is necessary for me to do here to-morrow, so that on Thursday I may be at liberty to set off for Portsmouth.—14th, Went to the Castle —prepared my colours and went up stairs to paint the window with its stained glass. Having done this I began to pack up my painting matters for departure, and contrived, with a carpenter's help, to secure the wet picture from the touch of its case. Showed Lord Lansdowne the picture, who told me he would pay me for the portrait of the Marchioness and The Sick Lady after the 1st of January on his return from

Spain. The Marchioness inquired the price of each. I told her 50 guineas for the portrait and 150 for the picture. Dined in the Castle: took leave of the Marchioness, the young ladies, and the Marquis: returned to the Star, settled my bill, and resolved to set off for Portsmouth in the morning."

The conduct of the eccentric Lord of Southampton Castle seems not at all eccentric in these modest records of the great artist: the noble lord and his lady lived, it is true, in a romantic place; but, save in having forsaken Bowood, and displayed their banner in this old worm-eaten hold, their way of life seems to have been polite and hospitable—nay, elegant. They loved the old associations of the spot and the maritime excursions which it afforded; and they are still remembered with respect by the people of Southampton. Wilkie visited Portsea, and was mechanic enough to feel astonished with the magnificence of the docks and the wonderful block machinery of the ingenious Brunel. He dined with his brother and the officers of the mess, and disliked their conversation, which was all of a martial character; nor did he think it improved by the admission of some naval officers, who gave it a maritime turn. He escaped from this, and sought refuge in the Isle of Wight: visited Ryde and Newport and Cowes, but neglected to look at Undercliff, the most romantic portion of that fine isle, or to visit the collection of pictures at Appledurcombe. He found, however, at his friend Mackenzie's, pictures from the hand of Rembrandt and Terburg, which he said he "admired much;" and at Ryde he happened

to meet with the Hoppners, and heard too that Beechey was residing in that "out-of-the-way place." This was in 1808; but Wilkie lived long enough to see all that part of the isle an out-of-the-way place no longer: steam navigation has brought the hitherto secluded beauties of the southern side of the Isle of Wight in a manner to the mouth of the Thames, and covered its eagle cliffs and fairy valleys with mansions and villas. On his way by Gosport to London he visited the place where the works of the French prisoners were exposed to sale: he was astonished with the ingenuity of that people, he said, but disgusted with the want of delicacy and modesty in some of their productions. He made another attempt to enjoy an evening with the military comrades of his brother at Portsmouth; but found them too convivial and boisterous, and took the road to London, where he arrived on the 20th day of September, and resumed his studies, and continued the daily record of his labours, visits, and engagements.

JOURNAL.

"*September* 20th, Went to breakfast with Haydon, and talked over with him the events of my excursion to Southampton. I saw the fire at Covent Garden Theatre, which broke out this morning early: the whole of the edifice was nearly consumed when I arrived. Went to the Admiralty; saw Lord and Lady Mulgrave, who requested me to dine with them that evening, and bring Haydon with me. I communicated this to Haydon; and as he wished to see my

portrait of the Marchioness of Lansdowne, he came with me to my lodgings; and I was agreeably surprised by finding his opinion much more favourable than I could have expected; indeed, he went so far as to say that some parts of it were infinitely superior to any thing I had hitherto done. At 6 we went to dine; I took the portrait of the Marchioness of Lansdowne with me; and as Lord Mulgrave seemed pleased with it, I left it there for a few days.—21st, Got a cap to paint from in my picture of The Sick Lady; I put in the cap in the sketch, and began to make drawings for the hands of the lady; went and asked Mrs. Stodart to show me some caps; one of them was exactly the thing, and she kindly allowed me to have it home with me.—22d, Had a note from Anthony Carlisle proposing subjects for painting; began to paint at 11, and continued till 3, in which time I finished the cap and the two hands of the sick lady. Had a call from Ridley Colborne.—23d, While I was at breakfast Reinagle came in, and staid a considerable time; he looked on the picture of The Sick Lady, and found a great number of faults, without pointing out a single merit. When he was gone I began to paint, and put in the gown of the old lady, during which time I had a call from a person of whom Reinagle spoke—a Mr. Burrell—who complained much of a picture painted for him by Lawrence.—24th, Began to paint at 10, and continued till 4, and succeeded in putting in a great part of the shawl of the sick lady. Had a call from Burnet, who brought me the picture of The Jew's Harp, on purpose to be finished.—25th, Haydon

came to breakfast, during which Linnel called; went with Haydon to Chalon's, who showed us most of the pictures which he had beside him: we went to Mr. Thomas Hope's, who was very kind, and showed us some drawings of the ancient costume which he meant soon to publish.—26th, Began to paint at 10, and continued till 4; put in the raw colouring of the shawl and the chair of the old lady.—27th, Had a call from Mr. Chalon; discontinued painting to-day at 4, after having done something to the head of the old man and lightened the coat of the physician. Dined, then called on Haydon, but did not find him; came directly home; made a slight sketch of a subject I have in contemplation—The Cut Finger.—28th, Began to paint at 10, and wrought till I glazed in the shawl of the old lady, painted in the border, and finished the bed-cover. Dined at 4, and called on Seguier.—29th, Took the cap back to Mrs. Stodart; went to the Admiralty, where I saw Lord Mulgrave, and was invited to dine with him, and desired to bring Haydon. I brought away the portrait of the Marchioness of Lansdowne; began to paint, and went over several parts of my picture of The Sick Lady. Dressed, and with Haydon dined with Lord Mulgrave, and had a long conversation on English poetry.—30th, Wrought till 4 o'clock without interruption; altered the chair in the corner of the picture of The Sick Lady, which has improved it much. I did not get to the Academy.

"*October* 1st, Had a call from Mr. Rogers, the poet, to look at my pictures: as he went out, Burnet came in. I then had a call from Lawrence and one of his

friends. I showed them my pictures, with which they seemed a good deal pleased; and Lawrence's friend, whose name I could not make out, gave me a commission to paint him a picture, leaving time, subject, and price entirely to myself.* I was principally employed to-day glazing in the background of The Sick Lady, which I may say I have very nearly completed.—2d, Haydon and Seguier came to breakfast; but Chalon, though he had promised, did not appear.—3d, Began to paint at 12, and put in a looking-glass in the picture of The Sick Lady, on the top of a chest of drawers, which has improved it much. Went with Haydon to the Academy, and took plans.—4th, Began to paint in the small parlour of The Jew's Harp; went over the hand of the girl and other parts of the composition. Went to the Academy, and began the figure of Cincinnatus; put in a slight outline.—5th, Had a walk; and when I began to paint, Chalon called, and sat with me for some time. Mr. and Miss Goldsmith came with Mulready; they liked the portrait of the Marchioness very much: I gave over painting after having put in the peacock feather in the head of the girl in The Jew's Harp. To Somerset House, and drew for two hours.—6th, Made some alterations in the picture of The Sick Lady, by darkening the shawl of the mother, which improved it much. Began afterwards to The Jew's Harp, on which I put the articles necessary to complete the top of the picture. It is almost entirely finished by this day's work. Had a call from Lady Mulgrave and her

* This, as we shall see, was Mr. Angerstein.

sister. Went to the Academy, and did a little to my figure.—7th, Called on John Campbell at the Temple; he was out, but I left his father's portrait at his chambers. Came home, and commenced on the sketch of The Cut Finger. Sent a man to Liston's for the pheasants which were lying there for me.—8th, Had a call from Sharp the engraver, and found him rather a singular character: he expressed a wish to engrave some of my pictures. Began to paint and put in most part of the sketch of The Cut Finger. Haydon called, and told me that he and I were invited to dine with Lord Mulgrave, and that he could not dine with me as had been proposed. Dined at the Admiralty.—9th, Strolled with Haydon to Hampstead, and sauntered about the Heath.—10th, Began to paint at 10, and made some alterations in the picture of The Sick Lady, which occupied me till 2, when a young girl came whom I had sent for, and I began to alter the head of the girl in The Jew's Harp from her, which has mended it much. Went to the Academy.—11th, Sent for a man to sit as a model: he did not suit me, and I sent him away. I then began to complete my sketch of The Cut Finger, which occupied me till 4 o'clock. Went to the Crown and Anchor, and dined with the Thistle Club; was home before ten.—12th, Called on Burnet, and saw him at work; went to Mulready's, and found him engaged on his picture; then came home, and began to paint, alternately, on the three pictures before me, viz. The Sick Lady, The Jew's Harp, and The Cut Finger. Studied at the Academy till 8; home, and found an invitation from Lord Mulgrave to dine with him to-mor-

row.—13th, Commenced this day with the picture of The Cut Finger; was interrupted a whole hour by G., who bothered me with his ground and colours. Burnet came in, and stood while I put in some touches in The Jew's Harp, which he took away with him. As he went, John Campbell, from the Temple, came in; went to Lord Mulgrave's, where I had the honour of meeting Canning; during the evening Cosway, who was there, spoke a great deal, and Canning very little. Lord Mulgrave sent to Sol's Row for my picture of The Sick Lady to show to Cosway; came away at half-past 10 o'clock.—14th, Had a walk in the morning, and on returning had a message from Charles Bell*, requesting to see me. I began to paint on The Cut Finger, and afterwards went to Charles Bell, who wished to consult me about the approaching election of Professor of Anatomy to the Royal Academy, for which he intended to stand as a candidate. I agreed to call on four academicians in his cause to-morrow morning.—15th, Went to Woodford, who was out of town, and to Sir William Beechey, whose vote I found engaged: Sir William desired me to sit down till he made a sketch of my head; he then began on a kit-cat canvass to lay in the groundwork of a portrait, which he succeeded in doing before 2 o'clock, during which time Haydon, who was with me, went out to canvass Smirke for Bell, but his vote was also engaged. Home, and began to make drawings for my picture of The Cut Finger; then went to Bell, with whom I found Haydon, to tell him of our unsuccessful

* Afterwards Sir Charles Bell.

endeavours; wished to go to the Academy, but Haydon, who was seized by an idle fit, refused to go, but pulled me away to Drury Lane, to enjoy The Honey Moon.—16th, Called on Hoppner, and found him sitting in the parlour in a rather melancholy humour, but conversation brightened him up a little. Turnerelli called, and, reminding me of my promise to dine with him, took me to his house in Kentish Town, but as I did not altogether relish the company I found, I came away soon after dinner, and began to write to my father.—17th, My brother James arrived this morning from Portsmouth; walked out to try and find a person as a model for my picture, and had the good fortune to find one before I had gone the length of the street; at 12 the model came, and I began to paint from her the head of the old woman in The Cut Finger; she sat till near four. Haydon, on whom I called, took another unaccountable idle fit, and insisted on going to the theatre instead of the Academy: I allowed him to do so by himself, and went and drew at the Academy.—18th, Went to the British Institution, where I saw many students; called on Sir William Beechey, who began to paint on my portrait, and continued at it till near 4: went with Haydon to the Academy, and studied there till 8.—19th, Sent for a sitter, by which I might finish the head of the old woman in The Cut Finger; while at work, I received a letter from Mr. Annesley, containing a draft for 30 guineas, the price of the picture of The Jew's Harp; sold out stock to the amount of 50*l.*, for which I received 32*l.*—20th, Paid my brother 20 of the 25*l.* I borrowed a year ago, and he

left me at half-past 10 o'clock; I began to paint at 11, and finished the old woman's cap, and made a drawing of one of her hands. Went with Haydon to the Academy, and continued drawing at the colossal hand till 8.—21st, Began to paint the hands of the old woman from the hands of a person who visits the people with whom I lodge; wrought till 4, and got in part of the sleeves.—22d, Called on Sharp the engraver, who showed me several of his prints, one of which he requested me to correct for him with a piece of chalk; I took it home for that purpose. Gave over painting at 5, having done in the sleeves and handkerchief of the old woman. Went to the Academy, and finished the drawing of the large head.—23d, Haydon and I went and drank tea at Sam Strowager's (the man-model of the Academy), and came away mutually pleased with the respectability of our entertainment.—24th, To Sir William Beechey's to breakfast; was introduced to Lady Beechey; Sir William expected another sitter, and could not proceed with my portrait. Home, and began to paint from a little girl, and in the course of the day put in another hand in my picture of The Cut Finger.—25th, Finished the little boy's hand in The Cut Finger, which I think I have painted tolerably well.—26th, Breakfasted with Sir William Beechey, and afterwards sat for my portrait; Sharp the engraver came in, and amused us very much. Home at 12, and began to paint hands in my picture from a little girl whom I got on purpose; went to the Academy.—27th, Called on Heaphy; found him employed in his painting room, and looked at his pictures. Began to paint at 12, and had a little boy to

sit for the hand and arm of the child in The Cut Finger. —28th, Painted till 4, and went over the boy's hand with the cut finger. To the Academy, and in returning through Leicester Square, looked on the moon and the other planets through a telescope for a penny.—29th, Made drawings of hands till 12, when I began to paint and put in from nature the hand of the girl snatching the knife out of the boy's hand.—30th, Called on West, but did not find him at home; then went to Sir William Beechey's, and made an interesting examination of a picture by Vandyke.—31st, Began to paint from a little girl the left arm of the little boy; at 12 another girl came, from whom I painted the head of the girl looking over the old woman's shoulder; at 2 another girl came, from whom I painted in the arm of the taller girl.

"*November* 1st, A little girl sat for the hands and feet of the boy; the painting of which occupied me till 12. To my no small surprise the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne called with two of her ladyship's daughters, to whom I showed the pictures on which I am at present engaged, and promised to take the picture of The Sick Lady to Lansdowne House to-morrow morning. After they were gone, the model arrived for the hand and arm of the taller girl in the picture, which I finished about 4 o'clock.—2d, Took the picture of The Sick Lady to Lansdowne House; saw the Marquis and Marchioness, and had the satisfaction to find it was much liked by the family. Home, and began to paint from nature the girl looking over the old woman's shoulder, and then began on the cap of the taller girl. Had a call from Peter Cleghorn, just

arrived from Scotland. Went with Haydon to the Opera House to see the Covent Garden Company play Henry the Eighth; was much pleased with the Wolsey and Catharine of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons. —4th, Began to work at 10 and continued till 4, and put in the dress of the girl looking over the old woman's shoulder; and also a part of the background.—5th, Sat to Sir William Beechey for my portrait from 10 to 12. Home, and had a call from Mr. Annesley, to whom I showed the pictures I have beside me. Had a letter from my sister Helen telling much that I loved to hear from my native Cults. Altered the gown of the old woman in The Cut Finger; put into my picture the apron, and a piece of white drapery on the knee of the old woman. — 6th, Walked to Camden Town: Haydon came to breakfast; we went to church together, and heard a good sermon from Sydney Smith. Had a call from Lord Mulgrave; after he went away came Peter Coxe, who began reading to me part of a work which he had in the press against Napoleon; but was interrupted by Lord Mulgrave, who brought in his lady to look at the picture of The Cut Finger: his lordship went away, and I heard the remainder of the work read; we then walked out, and observing a house to let in one of the streets, we went in to inquire about it, when Mr. Coxe pulled out his manuscript, and began to read it to the woman who had the house in keeping. I left him, and took a look at the Elgin marbles. — 7th, I began to alter the effect of the sketch of The Cut Finger; painted in part of the petticoat of the old woman. Went to the Aca-

demy, and afterwards to Romney's, where I found Raimbach and Wyatt, and spent a pleasant evening. — 8th, Painted from 10 till 4, when I had a call from Newton; put in the blue handkerchief of the tallest girl, the ribands of her cap, and touched the petticoat of the old woman. — 9th, Painted in the boy's pinafore; then went to look for lodgings, and saw some in Newman Street, which I thought would suit me. — 10th, Took Haydon to look at the Newman Street lodgings; found they would not suit me: continued going from house to house till 12 o'clock, when we succeeded in getting a suite which, for respectability and cheapness, completely satisfied me: we found them at Mrs. Coppard's, 84. Great Portland Street. I am to have two sitting-rooms and two bed-rooms, and to enter upon them on Monday fortnight. I painted a little, and had a letter from my father, telling me what was doing in Cults. Went to the Academy, and saw Constable: the only thing I painted at home to-day was the pinafore of the boy, which I am not sure but I must rub out; it seems not the proper colour. — 11th, Rubbed out to-day what I had done yesterday to the child's pinafore, and painted it in again of a bright yellow colour, which, with the dark coloured trousers, improved the look of the picture greatly. — 12th, Haydon came to breakfast; saw the picture, and approved of the boy's clothes, but objected to the blue apron of the old woman, on account of its being too cold for that part of the picture. When he was gone I began to paint, and finished the cap of the old woman, and put in the cat at her feet. — 13th, Seguier called: he liked The Cut Finger,

as far as it goes, better than any thing I have done. Went with him to Coppard's, to see my new lodging: agreed to give 20*l.* a year to keep a servant for me. Seguier advised me to lessen the boy's hand, and alter the colour of his pinafore. — 14th, Altered the boy's pinafore, as Seguier had suggested, from a strong to a pale yellow, which has certainly improved the look of the picture. — 15th, Succeeded to-day in putting in almost the whole dress of the tallest girl, except the stockings and shoes. — 16th, Began to paint after 10, and wrought till 4; had a call from Mrs. Flaxman and Miss Flaxman, who invited me to come and see them in the evening; which I did. I retouched to-day the petticoat of the tallest girl, painted one of the boy's feet, and the shoes of the old woman. — 17th, Called to-day on Dr. Baillie; had an invitation to dine with Lord Mulgrave, which I was very sorry to be obliged to decline, having accepted of an invitation from Cleghorn. Painted the feet of the tallest girl and the wooden clog. — 18th, Painted in various little parts of the picture; put mugs and other utensils on the table. Burnet called, and urged me to make the wall behind the old woman much whiter. — 19th, Walked before breakfast, though the morning was wet: had a note from Lord Mulgrave, requesting to know what price I had set upon my picture of The Sick Lady, as he wished to pay me for the sketch. Was employed principally to-day in painting the table and some of the articles on it. Found, on returning from the Academy, a card from Lord Mulgrave inclosing a cheque for fifteen guineas

for the sketch of The Sick Lady. — 20th, Haydon called to look at my picture: he approved of the changes which I had made. — 21st, Accompanied Seguier to Henry Hope's, where we staid some time, examining the pictures in the two rooms up stairs, in which I found some things which will be of use to me in my picture: home, and painted till 4, when I had a call from Mr. Prince Hoare, who staid with me an hour. Dined at Dr. Baillie's, where I met the two Miss Baillies. — 22d, Had a call from Mr. Neave of Hampstead, who insisted much that I should take a group of portraits of his family, and invited me to dine with him that we might consult about it. Worked a little, and put into my picture the whitewashed wall behind the old woman and the tea-things in the corner; went to the Academy. — 23d, Began to paint after breakfast, and continued till 4; during which time I finished the part under the table at the window, and glazed the purple petticoat of the tallest girl, and painted the fire. Had a call from Jackson, who is just arrived from Yorkshire; Ramsay also called, and left some of his engravings to show to Hunt. — 24th, Walked to Paddington; began to paint at 10; had a call from Mr. Sharpe of the Institution, who requested me to dine with the students at their public dinner, which I declined. Went over the wall behind the old woman's head, for the purpose of working it; I also put in a small looking-glass in the wall to bring her hand out from the back-ground. Dined with Mr. Neave, where I met Sir John and Lady Sheffield. — 25th, Did a little more to the whitewashed wall, and put in some little articles about the

fireside. Called and saw the sketches of Constable, with which I was much pleased. — 26th, Haydon came to breakfast with me; when he was gone I began to paint, but first sent out the girl of the house to buy a fowl, which was plucked for me to paint from; put in the fowl with the oil bottle on the white wall. — 27th, At church, and heard a very good sermon from a Mr. Rushwood; began to write a letter to my father, telling him of my intention of leaving Sol's Row for Great Portland Street. Dined with Wilson in South Street, where I met Gourlay, and Spankie, and Stark. I found Spankie* a man of great powers of conversation, with a copious fund of ideas, and very agreeable manners. — 28th, Began to pack up my several articles of furniture for removal, which occupied me till 1 o'clock. Paid Mrs. Good the last week's rent of my lodgings, and made her a present of a guinea to buy something for her daughter as a remembrance. I took leave of her with very considerable regret, and having got most of my pictures into the coach, I left Dodson to bring the trunks and come off to 84. Great Portland Street, where I found every thing ready for me, and before 4 o'clock had every thing put in its proper place. I wrote a note informing Lord Mulgrave of my change of abode. Jackson and Haydon came to tea, and I spent with my brother Thomas and them a very pleasant evening. — 29th, In my picture to-day I made the slate a little larger; painted some things about the chimney-piece, and put in the piece of stock which hangs over it. — 30th, Painted in the pewter basin, and wrought round about.

* The late Mr. Sergeant Spankie.

"*December* 1st, Went to Sir William Beechey to sit for my picture at 10 o'clock, when after staying doing nothing till half-past 11, he began to paint: he had cleaned the picture of Vandyke, which I think has injured it. Home, and put in the tongs and poker at the side of the fire. I happened to try to-day a little white colour which had grown fat by standing, and found it to work in a rich and very easy manner.—2d, The only thing I did to-day was the chair in the corner of my picture. Haydon approved of the pewter basin very much. I called on Sharpe, whose picture, I think, a very great effort, although too much in imitation of Terburg. Saw Lord Mulgrave, who told me that Miss Phipps was dangerously ill; told the sad news to Jackson and Haydon. Mr. Neave sat with me for some time, and talked over the sketch of his family picture. Called on Mr. Stodart, and brought away one of his fowling-pieces for the purpose of introducing into my picture. Did nothing to my picture to-day.—4th, To church, where I heard Sydney Smith preach a sermon, which, for its eloquence and power of reasoning, exceeded any thing I had ever heard. The subject was the conversion of St. Paul, of which he proved the authenticity, in opposition to all the objections and doubts of infidelity. Called on Mrs. Baillie and left my card; called at the Admiralty, and was sorry to find that Miss Phipps was no better. *Mem.* The delicacy which is the offspring of power, is always superior to the softness of a mind which cannot rise above the pretty and the delicate.—5th, Painted from 10 till 4, and put into my little picture the small ship on the chair, and

finished the floor and the small pieces of wood upon it. —6th, Called on Liston and Bannister, who proposed to me for a subject "The Opening of a Will;" which I consider an excellent idea, and I am much obliged to them for suggesting it. Returned, and wrought at my picture; the chief thing I did was to paint over the cloth which hangs across the chimney. Had a call from Mr. Neave, who made some proposals regarding the intended group of family portraits.—7th, Began to paint at 10, and continued till 4, interrupted only by a call from Seguier. Put in the flower-pot in the window of my picture, with the shining of the sun on the wall. I also began a small sketch of my intended group of portraits of the Neave Family.—8th, Had a call from the Marquis of Lansdowne, who had come to town for a few days. Went to Mr. Raimbach's, where I met Newton; heard some fine music from Mrs. Raimbach; stayed supper, which kept me till 1 o'clock.—9th, I made some alterations in the fire-place of my picture; did a little to the window, and laid in my sketch of the Neave portraits.—10th, Had a call from Mr. and Mrs. Neave, who came with their eldest daughter: they approved in a great measure of my small sketch. Called at the Admiralty, and found that Miss Phipps was recovering; called on Mrs. Stodart, and brought away the Æolian harp which she had been so good as to give me. I painted to-day the fowling-piece over the chimney, with the belt attached. —11th, To church, where I heard an impressive sermon from our new clergyman. Had a long conversation with Jackson about a professor who gave lectures on the arts and manufactures of Great Britain.

—12th, Received a note from Lord Mulgrave sealed with black, requesting me to take particular care of the sketch I had made of his poor child; from which I but too truly concluded she was dead. Called at the Admiralty, and inquired how my Lord and Lady Mulgrave were. Called on Mr. Wells, and saw, among other pictures, a very fine one by Ostade, which he was so kind as to promise to lend me. Painted in a little of the ceiling of the room.—13th, Had a call from Mr. Neave and his eldest son, who I think will make rather a good subject. *Mem.* I fear, from the number of alterations proposed by Mr. Neave in the small sketch, that I shall, in proceeding with the picture, not have so much of my own will as is necessary to do myself justice in the undertaking. I put into my picture of The Cut Finger the lantern hanging by the ceiling, and touched a little on the rafters.—14th, Heard that Harlow's goods had been seized on to pay the Income Tax. Glazed the piece of cloth hanging on the chimney-piece of my picture.—15th, Went to sit at Sir William Beechey's, where I stood for three hours, during which time all that he did to the picture was merely a slight rubbing on one of the hands, being for the whole time occupied with Mr. Tupper and a lawyer, who came to consult about a lawsuit respecting the prints of Boydell's Shakspeare. I painted in the towel and the back of the chair, and went over part of the chimney behind it.—16th, Went to the Middle Temple Hall, and saw the portrait of Charles the First, by Vandyke; went to Mr. Harmon in the city, where I was much gratified by the sight of his collection, particularly by the Ostade, which I

think is one of the finest I have seen by that master. I also saw a small picture by Teniers, which had a head in it remarkable for the life it seemed to have in the eyes. Mr. Steers, who was with me, gave me a hint that Mr. Harmon wished me to paint a picture for him. Began to paint, but all I did was by way of experiment.—17th, Haydon approved of some of the alterations which I proposed in The Cut Finger, and approved of the sketch which I had made for the group of portraits, and told me that I ought not on any account to alter my original arrangement of the boy's dress. When he was gone, I began to paint, and after laying the ground on the panel for Mr. Neave's picture, I continued till 4 o'clock on The Cut Finger; put in a piece of curtain hanging on the chimney-piece over the tallest girl's head, which has improved the picture very much. I propose making the ground darker, particularly the stock.—18th, Went to breakfast with Seguier, and took up Haydon and Prout by the way; then to church, where Sydney Smith preached.—19th, Painted at the things on the chimney-piece of The Cut Finger. Had a present of a brace of pheasants sent to me from Mr. Henley.—20th, Went over the fowling-piece in my picture again.—21st, I went to-day over the drapery of my picture, and made some obvious improvements.—22d, Had a talk with Mr. Clarke on the old English writers; he decidedly preferred Milton and Cowley in their prose writings, when compared with the boasted improvements of modern writers; he spoke with admiration of the plays of Molière, and advised me to get acquainted with them. Mr. Neave called; he sat,

and I began the picture; and before he went away, put in the figures slightly of himself and Mrs. Neave. —23d, Called at the British Gallery, and saw the pictures of the candidates for the premiums, and was very much amused by some of them. Came home, and began to paint on The Cut Finger; but as I was not satisfied with what I was doing, I took a walk. —24th, I began to paint; Mr. and Mrs. Neave, and three of their children, came in, and I succeeded in putting in all their figures. I did nothing to my picture of The Cut Finger to-day. —26th, Made some alterations in the picture of The Cut Finger. Mr. Neave and three of his boys came and sat with me till near three, in which time I sketched them all in, and then wrought over the whole group of portraits. Had a note from William Godwin, inviting me to dine with him on Friday next, to meet Dr. Wolcot and Mr. Liston. —27th, Paid the Coppards the first month's rent of my lodgings, thirteen pounds and odd. Began to paint, but the day being dark, did not get on rapidly; got over the tallest girl's petticoat in The Cut Finger. —28th, Painted to-day on the cushion of the chair by the side of the picture. —29th, Had a long account from Sir William Beechey to-day of Mr. Boydell's being nonsuited about the Shakspeare Gallery; admired, with Mr. Neave, Reynolds's portrait of Zachary Mudge, which was the first he painted after his return from Italy; went and looked at some of the old pictures collected by Sir Francis Bourgeois, and liked them much. The darkness of t day prevented me from working at my picture. —30th, Dined with Godwin, and met Wolcot and Liston. I was highly enter-

tained with the humour of Wolcot, although sometimes gross. He broached some strange doctrines; he declared that he had a great reverence for the Divine Being; but he considered religion to be a means in the hand of Providence for producing mischief."

The narrative of this daily journal has been allowed to flow on in its full and simple detail till the history of the pictures of The Sick Lady, The Jew's Harp, and The Cut Finger, was completed. From these entries genius, whilst contending with difficulties, may derive consolation, and even dulness, which believes that labour can accomplish every thing, may be cheered from the toils of Wilkie. None of these three works came at once from the fashioner's hand; the reigning sentiment was indeed present to the painter's mind from the first, but all of an auxiliary nature; all that goes to heighten the effect, or illustrate the sentiment, rose slowly, I had almost said reluctantly, on his fancy. He listened with astonishing composure to all who came with counsel on their lips; he rejected no advice without duly considering it; he hesitated at no experiment either of colour or arrangement; he boggled at no labour if it promised amendment. He rose early to his studies, and, in spite of continuous visits, wrought late; he was not a painter by fits and starts, nor had he any cause to complain that particular times and seasons were required to the operations of his fancy: when the light of the day was clear, he wrought without regarding whether it was winter or summer, seed-time or harvest. When he had finished his labours at his lodgings, he went

to the Academy, and drew from living and dead models with all the ardour of a student in his first quarter's attendance; and as he knew that the English school was reproached for imperfection in drawing, he drew diligently from the antique marbles, and though he did not always reach their flowing delicacy of outline, he never failed to seize the sentiment of the original.

The picture of The Sick Lady was, as we have said, the offspring of long study, and of frequent retouching and amendment. The scene is very natural and affecting: an only daughter lying on a sick-bed, watched by an anxious father and mother, and receiving the visit from her physician, who is called to pronounce for death or life. The young lady—a meek and gentle creature—lies patient with her eyelids half closed, nor seeks to lift them to the face of her physician, who sits calmly counting the throbs of her burning pulse, with an air, from which her mother can gather neither hope nor despair, though she is looking as if she would look him through. The father has risen from reading a page of the Christian's book of comfort, and looks and listens like one who would fain hear words of consolation, however faint. The room is slightly darkened; a cloth is thrown over the cage of the young lady's favourite bird, lest even its well-known song might distress her; while her little dog has come to the bed-side, and looks up anxiously, as if inquiring how she feels. This last is a true touch of nature. The whole picture is composed of such delicacies as defy description.

The Jew's Harp is one of those happy works, which, without calling forth the highest powers of the painter, gather as much fame as compositions of higher reach. The story is told in three words: a boy and girl return from a fair with a Jew's harp, on which they have laid out their pence instead of gilt gingerbread; and their father tries the merit of their purchase, while they look and listen delighted. The dog, which accompanied them to market, lies at their feet weary more with its own gambols than the length of the journey; while the sweet sounds which the old man seems extracting from the little instrument satisfies the whole party of the excellence of the purchase. Nor has the girl forgotten to buy a riband, which she has already round her neck, while the peacock feather in her slouched hat speaks of green fields and country air. The accessories of this pretty picture show with what care the painter studied his interiors.

The Cut Finger tells the misfortune of a boy who cuts his finger, while fitting the mast in a boat, to which a basin of water performs the part of a lake. Nothing can exceed the rueful visage of the blubbering boy, save the matronly anxiety of an old woman, who, with all her cottage skill, and rustic appliances, is binding the wounded finger up. A young sister looks anxiously over the matron's shoulder; while a handmaid is taking the delinquent's knife from his right hand, which he seems to hold hard, seeking in the grip relief from the pain of his finger. This picture was, when it appeared first, called The Young Navigator by the purchaser, Mr. Whitbread, who de-

sired to see in its story the maritime glory of England in the dawn; but a boy who cried at the sight of his own blood was not considered a true representative of our conquering tars, and the picture soon took the humbler name which the great painter at first bestowed upon it. The picture of the Marchioness of Lansdowne was a faithful likeness of that lady—too faithful, as I have heard. Wilkie complained that his lady sitters seldom rose with praises on their lips at the versions which he made of their beauty, and used to observe, with a smile, that Lawrence excelled all by studying to please in the wide dominions of flattery.

When Wilkie moved from Sol's Row to more commodious apartments in Great Portland Street, he resumed his labours in touching and retouching his picture on the family piece of the Neaves; and he turned over, as he said, in his mind the subject suggested by Bannister of Reading the Will, which, dawning upon him by degrees in all its capabilities of contrast and character, he pronounced capital. We shall resume the account of his works from his daily memoranda, and employ his own words; they are ever simple, and clear, and unaffected.

Journal, 1809.

"*January* 1st, Went to church with Jackson, who expressed no dissatisfaction, although Sydney Smith was not particularly brilliant.—2d, Went to Mr. Neave's: I painted till three, and by that time had gone over some part of the face and neck and breast. Met in the evening with Raimbach and Romney.—

3d, Went over the face of Mr. Neave in the picture, which I think I have improved: Mrs. Neave talked to me of our best authors like one who had read rather than heard of them.—4th, Went to Sir William Beechey's and staid there a considerable time, but he did not find it convenient to do any thing to my portrait.—5th, Mr. Neave and his son called, and I began on the head of the boy, which occupied me till two o'clock.—6th, This being Twelfth-night, I went by appointment to Sir William Beechey's, where we had a very splendid entertainment; the Hoppners were there, and after listening for some time to music, in which the Miss Beecheys are great proficients, we had a dance which lasted till supper time. I there met for the first time the too celebrated Lady Hamilton; she had with her a girl supposed to be the daughter of Lord Nelson, a creature of great sweetness: Lady Hamilton, knowing me by name, called me and said that her daughter had the finest taste imaginable, and that she excelled in graceful attitudes. She then made her stand in the middle of the room with a piece of drapery, and throw herself into a number of those elegant postures for which her Ladyship in her prime was so distinguished. She afterwards told me of all else her daughter could do, and concluded by asking me if I did not think her very like her father. I said I had never seen that eminent person. Lady Hamilton is lusty, and tall, and of fascinating manners, but her features are bold and masculine. Her daughter's name is Horatia Hamilton. After supper we were entertained by some songs from Lady Hamilton, and with a fine specimen of mimicry by Mr. Twiss, who

gave us a speech in the manner of Pitt, which many pronounced excellent.—7th, Whilst painting on the family picture of Mr. Neave, Burnet brought me the tracing of The Jew's Harp to look at. — 8th, I heard to-day that at the Institution the prizes were awarded as follows:—Dow, for an historical picture; Sharpe, for a domestic subject; and Master Linnell, for landscape. — 9th, Had a call from the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne, who looked at all my pictures, and expressed a wish to have The Sick Lady finished and brought to Lansdowne House: the Marchioness scolded me for not having the picture completed by the 1st of January, as I had promised. — 11th, I succeeded to-day in finishing my picture of The Sick Lady, and also did something to the picture of The Cut Finger. — 14th, Dressed, and went to Lansdowne House with my picture of The Sick Lady; saw the Marquis and Marchioness, who seemed to like the work well. I was asked when I would have the portrait of the Marchioness done, and on my answering in a fortnight, he said he should expect it, and would then settle with me for the whole. Mr. Neave called with his sons, and, as they were going away, to my great surprise, Sir George Beaumont came: he sat with me for some time, and said he had expected Haydon and I at Coleorton Hall, and that we had promised to write to him and say when we were coming. Put the head of Sheffield Neave into the family picture to-day.—15th, Had a call from Robertson, who lately returned from Scotland, and had called at Cults, and seen my father and mother.—16th, Was employed to-day on the pic-

ture of Lady Lansdowne: Lord Essex called to put me in mind, he said, of a commission which he had formerly given me. I succeeded in painting in the left hand holding the cup to my mind; then sat down to Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.—17th, Sir George Beaumont called: he said he had been at the Institution, and liked Mulready's picture better than he did Sharpe's: he liked Haydon's picture, too, as far as it had gone: on taking his leave he said he was going out of town soon.—18th, I had a call from Lord Mulgrave and Sir George Beaumont, to whom I shewed the group of portraits of the Neave family; the former asked me to dine with him at 6 o'clock: went, and met Sir George Beaumont, General Phipps, and Jackson, and spent, on the whole, a pleasant evening. They talked on a variety of subjects, and the conversation was instructive and sprightly.—20th, Went over the dwarf's dress in the picture of the Marchioness of Lansdowne; called on Constable, and was well employed looking over his collection of prints from Reynolds. Home, and was told that my laundress had absconded; lose by her about two pounds; thankful it was not greater.—21st, Had my usual walk in the morning; heard that St. James's Palace had been on fire, and some damage done: the Earl of Essex sent me a coffee cup of a Flemish pattern, which he thought I might use in my portrait of the Marchioness of Lansdowne.—23d, Mr. Neave came to me with the sad news of the death of Sir John Moore and the re-embarkation of our troops: went and heard a very sensible lecture from Anthony Carlisle, introductory to

his Course of Anatomy. When this was concluded he began to demonstrate the general divisions of the human body on the living figure, for which purpose he had Gregson in the room, who is a well made man. —25th, Had a call from a gentleman who brought compliments from Lady Mary Lindsey, and wished me to direct him to a skilful miniature painter. I recommended Andrew Robertson. Had a call from Lady Stanley, whom Chalon had told of my pictures; she admired The Cut Finger, and requested that I would allow her to bring Sir John Stanley to see it. Went and dined at Slaughter's.—26th, Painted on the portrait of the Marchioness of Lansdowne: it is now in an advanced state.—28th, Called on Sir William Beechey, whom I found in his painting-room, discoursing about a new vehicle made of India rubber, and which, of course, comes with strong recommendations.—29th, Sir William Beechey, and Haydon, and I, went to church, where we had a very good sermon from Sydney Smith, on the use and abuse of time. Home and wrote a letter to my father. —30th, Went with Jackson to the Royal Academy, where we heard Carlisle deliver his second lecture on anatomy: were much pleased, although he treated more on general matters than what applied particularly to our art.

"*February* 1st, Finished the portrait of the Marchioness of Lansdowne. Had a call from General Erskine, who proposed to me to paint a portrait of himself and his lady, which I declined. As he went, Sir Abraham Hume came in; he proposed several amendments in my pictures, which all went to keep

down or subdue the colours.—2d, Took my picture of the Marchioness of Lansdowne to Berkeley Square. I found that the Marquis was out of town, but was told if I came back in an hour I would see the Marchioness. I then went to call on Mr. Whitbread, whom I found in his dressing-room: he received me very kindly indeed. I said I had at last got a picture finished, which I intended for him: he said he should call immediately and see it. Called at Lansdowne House, and saw the Marchioness, who told me the Marquis would not be back for a week or ten days, and desired to know how much they were indebted to me for the pictures: I said two hundred guineas, and twelve pounds for the frames. I had no more than reached home when Mr. Whitbread called. He approved of my picture (The Cut Finger) very much, and seemed very well satisfied with it. He asked me to dine with him on Sunday, and bring The Cut Finger, and the portraits of my father and mother along with me, to show them to Lady Elizabeth: this I promised to do. I was much amused by reading the newspaper report of Mrs. Clarke's examination before the House of Commons. Visited Mr. Scott, to sell out for me fifty pounds of stock.—5th, Dressed and took my picture of The Cut Finger and my father and mother's portraits to Mr. Whitbread's. Lady Elizabeth looked at them, and, with Mr. Whitbread, approved of them much.—7th, Went to Andrew Robertson's, and sat for my picture till near 1 o'clock. Put in the small chips on the chair of The Cut Finger.—8th, This being the King's Fast, went to church, and heard an excellent sermon from Sydney

Smith. Sat till 3 o'clock for my portrait to Robertson.—9th, Mr. Cross called from the Marquis of Lansdowne, and gave me a draft for the two pictures of 222*l.*, payable in three months, on Coutts and Co. I painted to-day a nightcap, above the chimney-piece, in my picture of The Cut Finger.—11th, Had a call from Mr. Neave, who asked me what price I had fixed upon for his group of portraits: I told him two hundred guineas: he promised to bring his eldest daughter on Monday.—13th, Had a call from Mr. Dobree, who pressed me to think of a picture for him, and proposed a barber's shop as a subject. Went to Carlisle's lecture, and had a grand display of Gregson. As I came away, I met with Dr. Buchan, who spoke in strong terms of disapprobation of the lecture, though Carlisle is his friend. On my way home saw some curious old chairs at a broker's, one of which I should like to have.—14th, Bought one of these old-fashioned chairs: hope to find it useful in painting interiors.—15th, Received to-day a very handsome Valentine, with verses, signed Helen; but from whom I cannot conjecture.—17th, Went to-day to see the proceedings in the House of Commons, and hear the debates: the first thing that occupied the attention of the House was a complaint of Beresford against the 'Morning Post' for misrepresenting what had passed between him and Mr. Wardle the night before. An animated debate arose out of this small beginning, in which Perceval, Whitbread, and Sir Vicary Gibbs, bore a part: they then proceeded to call witnesses relative to the conduct of the Commander-in-Chief: several were examined. Mrs. Clarke was at last

brought in, but unfortunately not examined, so that we had no opportunity of hearing her speak. The House grew oppressively hot, and the examination exceedingly uninteresting, and Jackson and I came away without any reluctance at one o'clock.—19th, Haydon told me that Carlisle was disappointed at my refraining from answering his note, proposing subjects for my pencil; and Coxe told me that I owed a call to the Miss Baillies the first time I went to Hampstead. —20th, As I began to paint, Mr. Reynolds, the engraver, called, and told me that Mr. Whitbread wished me to make the Boy with the Cut Finger a little more youthful in the face, which I agreed to think of. Mr. Neave called and sat till after two o'clock, at which time I had gone over the greater part of the face. Called on Leigh Hunt, and had a great deal of talk with him on the Duke of York's business and Carlisle's lecture.—22d, Had a call from Mrs. and Miss Baillie, who left me a card to their rout on Friday, and Miss Baillie invited me to dine at Hampstead on Sunday s'ennight.—23d, Began to paint at 10, when Mr. and Miss Neave came, and I put her face into the picture.—24th, Had a visit from Mr. Chalon and Mr. Westall; was introduced to the latter for the first time. Went to Ottley's, and had the good fortune to find him at home: saw and admired his collection, particularly a Rembrandt, a Gaspar Poussin, a Nicolo Poussin, and a Correggio, the last of which, I may say, is almost the only picture of that master I have seen which justifies his fame: the Gaspar Poussin is most free and masterly in its execution; but I think the Nicolo, for its grandeur and poetic

solemnity, surpasses any thing that can be imagined: I thanked Mr. Ottley for the treat I had received. Home, and found that a book had been sent to me from Hector Macneil, the author of Will and Jean; it is a poem, and entitled 'The Lyric Muse of Scotland.' I regard this as a handsome compliment, coming from a man of his reputation. On returning from Mrs. Baillie's, I was told, when I had sat a few minutes at home, that from the light which reddened the sky and began to shine on the house-tops, there must be a great fire somewhere raging in London; my brother and I went out, and, following the direction of the smoke, found Drury Lane Theatre in a blaze.—25th, I was a little surprised before breakfast by a call from Lord Radstock, who wished me to see a picture which he had got, by Teniers; went and saw it, and found a great deal of fine painting in it. Had a card from Mr. Angerstein, inviting me to dine with him on the 2d of March, which I accepted.—26th, Went to Andrew Wilson's, where I saw two pictures in water colours—Italian views—very fine, and much in the style of Poussin.—27th, Went to Longman's, and amused myself for an hour looking over some new publications, among which was Sir John Carr's tour in Scotland, in which I found he had inserted what, at his request, I had sent him.—28th, Had a call from Mr. Gouldsmith, junior, who asked me to dine with him on Monday, and paint him a picture, the price of which he fixed at 50 guineas; he regretted that Mulready had asked so much for his picture as 300 guineas. Went to Mr. Whiteford's, where I looked over books

of prints, one of which, a volume of Ostade's etchings, I admired very much.

"*March* 3d, Called on Sir William Beechey, who told me a good deal about the old quarrels in the Royal Academy. Dined with Mr. Angerstein, and met Mr. Baring, Mr. West, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Fuseli; with whom I spent a most agreeable evening. Fuseli's conversation was particularly striking; and, sitting beside him, I had my full share of it. He talked with great discrimination on the different English versions of the great classic poets, and of the harmonious construction of our national poetry, in which he gave the preference to Shakspeare. He spoke of Haydon, and the historical picture he was just then painting, and gave it his decided approbation. On this, some of the company began to talk of Haydon's picture of the Holy Family, and to comment on the character of Joseph, and the miraculous conception, in a manner scarcely orthodox. They then began to discuss the merits of the Christian religion; and, although they admitted its divine origin, and the moral grandeur of its conceptions, they would not, on any account, allow that it was calculated to amend human nature. I opposed this strongly, but without effect. In the course of the evening, Fuseli, in the hearing of Angerstein and Lawrence, recommended me strongly to set my name down as a candidate for the rank of Associate before the next election in the Royal Academy.—5th, Haydon called: I told him what Fuseli had said of his picture at Angerstein's table; which naturally gave him great satisfaction. Went to Sir William Beechey's, who did in my hands in the por-

trait. Thence to Hampstead, to dine with Miss Baillie. Joanna told me during the evening that she had two volumes of plays, which were said to contain the plots of Shakspeare's Lear, King John, Comedy of Errors, and Henry the Fourth; which she would be glad to show me at some future time.—6th, Went to Hoppner's, to see a Tintoret, which for handling was very fine. Called on Owen, and saw his picture of the Dowager Lady Beaumont, which I think by much the finest thing Owen has yet done. I saw several portraits of his besides, which I also liked. He seems in his pictures to have acquired a very good surface; if it has any fault, it is in some places rather glossy. It puts me in mind of Cornelius Jansen.—7th, Put on a pair of new boots, which by the evening became so uneasy that I tried to pull them off, and failed; the bootmaker came, and failed also, for my legs were swelling: he was obliged to rip the seam before he could get them off.—14th, To Jackson's, where I saw the portrait which he is painting of Haydon. Had a silver key from Whiteford for the opera, where I saw many people whom I knew; and amongst them the Hoppners and Reinagles. I saw also the Princess of Wales.—17th, Painted from 11 till 2, and went over in that time Miss Neave's pelisse and part of the velvet window curtain. Had a call from Dr. Brewster, who brought a letter of introduction from Professor Leslie, of Edinburgh. Brewster is concerned in a Cyclopædia in Scotland, which will be a very extensive work. He gave me a high character of Thomas Campbell's new poem (Gertrude of Wyoming). Lord Mulgrave sent to me the picture of The Rent Day, that

it might profit by being beside me, before going to the Exhibition.—19th, Got the frame for The Cut Finger, which suited it remarkably well. Miss Gouldsmith called; I prevailed on her to sit for a few minutes, till I put in from her dress part of Miss Neave's pelisse. Lord Mulgrave came, and invited me to dine with him at the Admiralty on Saturday, and promised me the company of Sir George Beaumont.—22d, Took my picture of The Cut Finger to Mr. Whitbread, who seemed to like it well; Lady Elizabeth also seemed much pleased with it. I left the picture, and returned home to paint. I declined a dinner ticket from the Society of Arts, and employed myself in the evening in going on with my sketch of The Public-House Door.—23d, I had a call to-day from Cromek, the engraver, who told me that he had a picture from the country to place in the Royal Academy Exhibition, which he wished me to see; and for that purpose I accompanied him to his own house in Newman Street. The picture represents the arrival of good news; has in it a variety of characters, and is very well painted. —25th, Mr. Neave came, and I went on with his dress till 4, when I finished his figure entirely, and promised to go to Hampstead on Monday, and paint the face of the younger girl. Dined at the Admiralty; Lady Mulgrave was with us; the first time I had seen her since the death of her daughter.—28th, Cromek came, and told me that he wished to call on me with his friend Edward Bird, who had painted the picture of Good News; I fixed on to-morrow at 1. Went to Mr. Neave's, and finished the head of the younger girl; tried to put in her hands, but did not

succeed to my mind.—29th, Had the appointed call from Cromek and Bird; they looked at my picture of The Rent Day for some time, and then went away. I tried to amend the ceiling of the room in that picture, by adding some ornaments.—30th, Home, and painted till 4 o'clock on my picture of The Rent Day, and I think improved it much. Saw Haydon, who advised me not to go on with the picture of the Public-House Door.—31st, Went to Sir William Beechey's, where I was told of a new regulation which had passed into a law, that all Academicians were to be allowed to varnish and touch up their pictures, after they were hung on the walls, between the day of sending them in and the day of the private view. Went home, and began to put in a few touches in the picture of The Rent Day; put something into the cornice, and some bits of red into the figures.

"*April* 1st, Had a call from Burnet, who told me he was doing something to the plate of The Jew's Harp; called on Cromek, and told him I should call with Haydon to-morrow to see Bird's picture: thence to Turnerelli's, where I saw a bust of the Duke of Cumberland, which I did not think ill done. Whilst I was gone Lord Mulgrave and Sir George and Lady Beaumont called and saw my pictures.—2d, Took Haydon to Cromek's, where we saw Bird's picture; which, I must confess, on looking at a second time, I did not admire so much as I did at first. Went next to Mrs. Poole's, where we saw some pictures, of which we admired particularly a head of Christ by Guido, which, for that pale and livid colouring peculiarly adapted to the situation of the Saviour, is the

finest specimen of the master I ever saw. Went to Sir William Beechey's, with whom I staid till near 5, during which time he almost finished my portrait. I saw Haydon's picture, and was much pleased with it; by the glazing which he has lately given it, he has brought out some pieces of the finest colour: I hope the public will not be insensible to its merits. — 4th, Took my pictures of The Rent Day and The Cut Finger to the exhibition room of the Royal Academy. — 6th, Called on Sir George Beaumont, who received me very kindly, and showed me some pictures which he had painted lately, and told me he should paint me one at some future time: I was asked to dine with Sir George and Lady Beaumont on Wednesday; wrote a letter to Mr. Phillips the academician. — 8th, Painted on the family picture of the Neaves, but I do not know that I have improved it much. — 9th, To church, where I heard an excellent sermon from Mr. Dibdin, who is to be one of our preachers; he has a fine voice, and an impressive delivery. — 10th, Painted in the left hand of Mrs. Neave and the hands of the youngest girl. — 15th, Had a card from Mr. Murray of Fleet Street, requesting me to dine with him on Monday, and meet Walter Scott: Sir George and Lady Beaumont called, and took me in their carriage to see the picture of Rembrandt; this is a portrait of Rembrandt by himself, but larger than nature: it possesses an ease and freedom in the handling that surpasses any picture that I have seen of his before.—17th, Mr. Neave came with two of his sons, and I painted from him for more than an hour. Went to dine with Mr. Murray in Fleet Street, where I

met Mr. Westall, Mr. Ballantyne, and, for the first time, Walter Scott, whom I found most entertaining in conversation: he seems to possess a very rich mind, is very communicative of the all but universal knowledge he has acquired: he talked principally about the ancient Highlanders under the feudal system, and enriched his observations with interesting anecdotes; he repeated one of Campbell's poems (Lochiel's Warning). I sat till half-past 12.—18th, Went to a place in St. Martin's Lane to see the pugilists sparring; it amused me while it lasted very much; Gregson and several others were stripped; their energy and muscular action were interesting as studies.—19th, Painted seven hours, and finished the window-shutter, and put in most of Mrs. Neave's shawl.—20th, Had colours to grind, and did not begin to paint till 10, when I finished the handkerchief, and put in the sofa.—21st, Had a call from Mr. Reinagle, who came to make an apology for something he was reported to have said, and which he heard had hurt my feelings; I told him I had nothing to complain of, except that he had spoken his opinion of one of my pictures in my presence with too little consideration. Heard that Dr. Pitcairn had died suddenly of a putrid sore throat, which he had caught from examining the throat of a patient suffering from that disease.—23d, Called on Fuseli, with whom I sat some time; was introduced to the celebrated General Miranda; met and conversed for a considerable time with Callcott, the painter.—26th, Wrought to-day on the Turkey carpet, but did not get much done, though very indus-

trious. Met young Mr. Christie, who told me that Mr. Davison was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and to refund 18,000 pounds.—27th, Liston called and sat with me till 2, entertaining me much with an account of Cobbett.—30th, Haydon showed me two sketches from Macbeth, which he intended for his next picture; I approved of one of them, but advised him strongly to put in more figures."

On the first Monday in May the Exhibition of the Royal Academy was opened, and the beat of many an artist's heart was quickened with the hope of seeing groups gathered around works on which they had exerted their skill and exhausted their thought. From the painter of the scriptural epic to the humble limner of every-day faces, all are there, to see how the select Council have acquitted themselves of their arduous duty of assigning to each individual picture a place according to its merits or the expectations of the artist. From this survey it is seldom that satisfied faces return: some come silently and sullenly away; others communicate their disappointment to fellow-sufferers, and whisper their chagrin loud enough for all to hear: the Academician vows in secret to remember the insult he has suffered from the Council when he is next on the Hanging Committee: the Associate registers his wrath to use it up when he becomes, in his turn, a member: while the Student, who sees hundreds stand between him and the rank of Academician, who has already grown grey with hopes indulged in only to be disappointed, and, in addition, is now doomed to see the very best picture, he believes, he ever

painted defrauded of its proper position, and hung nigh the stars, is provoked to curse the want of taste and the selfishness in the "chosen Forty," and to vow that no good can come of human study till the ranks of the Royal Academy are extended, and works of high merit hung in the places of honour. But these are not all the ills which men who make art their study are heir to: criticism, in daily, weekly, and monthly quantities, is poured upon their productions, and sometimes upon their persons; for the political leaning of the painter has been made to darken or brighten the page in which the merits of his works are alone proposed to be discussed.

How Wilkie felt when the sharp claw of criticism was laid—which it sometimes was—on his paintings, it is not easy to say: he was a calm-minded man, and at present nothing occurred in the shape of remark that was calculated to ruffle him. It is true, that some thought his Cut Finger wanted the grasp of mind of his Village Politicians, and the poetic tranquillity of his Blind Fiddler, and that few were willing to see in it the sun-rise of our maritime glory; while others beheld in The Rent Day a distinct image of the oppression which the aristocracy exercises over the children of the clouted shoe. From these critical carpings Wilkie turned, not unwillingly, to those more equitable chippers and hewers, who perceived an improvement in the drawing and the colouring of his pictures, and an increase in the grace and propriety of his compositions. It has been remarked, however, that the opening of the doors of the Exhibition unsettles for a time the studies of the steadiest artists:

besides the influence which this public display of their works has upon their pictures, the sight of a fine picture renders the spectator desirous to see more productions from the same hand: others, more curious still, wish to see the face of those who thus charm them with the pencil; and, as the journals which we have quoted sufficiently prove, to partake of their society. No wonder, then, that during May and June artists seldom are able to settle down to work, or pursue, with their usual success, their allotted studies.

The Journal of Wilkie, during the period of the Exhibition, is unusually barren in early risings and long and continued sittings with living models before him, and contains, indeed, few of those changes in arrangement or shifting from one colour to another, and tryings of effect in furniture and household utensils, with which the earlier pages abound. Though The Reading of the Will had, as we have seen, been proposed to him by one who was not only an admirer, but who felt well where his strength lay, he had not so much as jotted down one recording sketch of the subject: he had, however, commenced collecting materials for his fine picture of The English Alehouse Door, a name ill exchanged for that of The Village Festival; nor seemed he at all damped in his enthusiasm about it by the remonstrances of Haydon, for the drama of strong drink he had seen performed in every alehouse from Cults to Canterbury; and he wished besides to measure himself with Teniers and Ostade. Of the studies for this picture he enters several intimations in his Journal: for example, on the 13th of May he says, "I painted all day on my

little sketch of The Public House Door, which I improved very much.—14th, Found Haydon waiting for me at home; we went to Paddington to look for a public house that might do for my picture, and saw one that may be of service; went as far as the canal, and came back together.—15th, Began to paint on my sketch of The Public House Door, and tried it upon an absorbent ground.—16th, Did something more to The Public House Door.—17th, Painted from 12 to 4, and put in a figure in the sketch of The Public House Door.—18th, Touched on the sketch of The Public House Door, for which I also made some drawings.—20th, Lady Mulgrave showed me a landscape by Gainsborough, which she had purchased, the first by that master I had ever seen: saw Mr. Shee's new poem (Rhymes on Art), in which he has done me the honour of mentioning me in a complimentary manner: lent Haydon my Scotch plaid for his picture of Macbeth; returned at 3 and painted till 5, on the sketch of The Public House Door.—24th, Put in two figures at the door of The Public House.—27th, Haydon called, and approved of what I had done to my sketch; I put in to-day the group where the man is paying the money.—29th, Mr. Colborne sent me his Ostade; went on with my sketch, and put in the figure of the girl with the pots. Had a polite note from Mr. Shee in answer to the letter of thanks which I sent him.—31st, Put in two figures in the stair on my sketch, and several figures at the long window.

"*June* 1st, Put in the girl and child in the foreground of the sketch.—2d, Lord Mulgrave showed me the picture of a fair, by Janstein, which was very

finely painted. — 7th, Painted from 1 to 4 on The Alehouse Door. — 8th, Went over all the sky in my sketch. — 9th, Called on General Miranda: he had a French bulletin and a large map of Germany before him, by which he endeavoured to prove that the French had lost nothing in the last battle: he had much energy of manner, and a great deal of gesticulation. Painted on The Alehouse Door till 4. — 18th, Haydon comes, as usual, to breakfast; and as we went out, Cromek and Bird called. — 19th, Went to the Royal Academy, and brought away my picture of The Cut Finger. The Rent Day had been taken away by Lord Mulgrave himself. Put some touches in The Cut Finger, to mend a scratch it had received in the Exhibition. — 20th, Put in a group in the distance in sketch."

CHAPTER VIII.

WILKIE IN DEVONSHIRE AND AT COLEORTON HALL. — EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL. — ELECTED AN ASSOCIATE OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY. — JOURNAL CONTINUED.

DEVOUT Catholics go on pilgrimage to the shrine of a favourite saint. The battle-field where empires have been lost and won is visited centuries after by the enthusiastic soldier; the poet goes to the banks of the Avon or the Ayr, and thinks, when he touches the birth-places of our most inspired bards, he is walking on holy ground: nor is a painter of any warmth of soul at rest till he has, in a like manner, visited Plympton, in Devonshire, where Sir Joshua Reynolds, the apostle of his art, was born. Stimulated, perhaps, by Haydon, as well as warmed by his own temperate enthusiasm about Sir Joshua and his genius, Wilkie, accompanied by Haydon, began his pilgrimage to the Devonshire shrine on Thursday, the 22d day of June 1809. Lady Mulgrave had expressed a wish that he would paint for her collection, now growing large, of Wilkie pictures and sketches, a portrait of himself; and Lord Mulgrave, in reiterating the wishes of his lady, desired him to paint it in Devonshire, a polite way of bidding him do his best and do it soon: he hoped inspiration from the fame of the dead, and more from the skill of the living. An illness, brought on by close study and those doubts

and fears to which the sensitive are exposed, during the early part of his journey, which was by land to Portsmouth, pressed sorely on Wilkie; but when the vessel in which he embarked began, with a fair breeze, to clear her way rapidly through the waters, the cloud which hung about him began to dispel of its own accord; and before reaching Plymouth, on the 28th, he wrote in his Journal, "I found myself much better this morning, and endeavoured to sit up in the cabin during the forepart of the day, and at noon got upon deck." As soon as he landed, he called on the Haydons, the Eastlakes, and Northcotes, names then or since famous; but Wilkie, fatigued with movements by land and sea, kept within doors, and wrote a letter home, relating to his father his adventures from the time he left London.

But before visiting the greater shrine of Reynolds, Wilkie, as in courtesy bound, visited the place of Haydon's birth and breeding at Underwood; nor did he neglect the cottage in which he lodged while a boy, nor the pictures at Boringdon (Lord Morley's seat), among which he saw some, he said, by Rubens, Vandyke, and Reynolds, which were very fine. On the 7th July, after having bathed in the sea, he went with Haydon to Plympton, and visited the house, then occupied by Haydon's schoolmaster, in which Sir Joshua was born: he was shown, he says, the room in which Sir Joshua first saw light, and the school-room where he was educated. As Wilkie was a man of no affectation, he felt himself inwardly cheered, but exhibited no rapture. From the Reynolds shrine he went to the Hall of Guild, where he saw, he says, a very fine portrait of himself

and portraits of two naval officers, painted before going to Italy, which, for composition, were as fine as any thing he ever did afterwards. From the hall he went to the house of an old lady, who showed him a very early picture by Sir Joshua, which, in spite of want of spirit and experience of touch, had much in it which promised future excellence. At the residence of Mrs. Mayo he likewise saw the portrait of an old man, which, though a little faded, was very finely painted: such was her reverence for it, that she would not allow a servant to clean it with either brush or towel, but caused the dust to be blown off with a pair of bellows; nevertheless, added Wilkie, the best-laid schemes are sometimes frustrated: a giddy housemaid drove the bellows-pipe through the canvass.

Escorted by Haydon, Wilkie visited the wooded scenes on the banks of the river Plym, rode to the top of Mount Edgecumbe to see the sun set, and was almost persuaded by his companion to sit up all night to behold a Devonshire day break and a cloudless sun arise. These reveries were interrupted by Northcote, who joined them in a stroll, and amused them much by varied powers of conversation, but pained Wilkie by endeavouring to persuade them that much which the church believed was untrue. In a visit to Sir Richard Elford, he paused for a moment, he says, to look at the native place of Sir Francis Drake, and listened with much pleasure to the entertaining anecdotes which Sir Richard, during dinner, related of Sir Joshua, whom he knew, and of Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, and Garrick, whom he had seen; but of these Wilkie has preserved no sample. For this we are

sorry; but he has our praise for refraining from remembering the acrid discussions of Northcote and his coterie, who entered upon the bitter subject of politics with as little temper and moderation as I ever remember. Nor was his dislike confined to any one set of ministers, or to any one form of government; all established authorities—the church, the law, the army, the navy—were alike subjected to his animadversions; while the hatred which he felt for men at home was balanced by his admiration of Napoleon and his government. In these sentiments the coterie of Northcote shared, and "I left them with less regret," says Wilkie, "than I should have done if their conversation had been less violent."

Of this visit to Devonshire, which lasted about a month, Wilkie speaks with much pleasure, though he confesses that the acrid conversations with Northcote were some alloy. As he went partly with the hope of amending his health, he rode much through the country, and, what was equally beneficial, bathed frequently in the sea, which, chilly at first, felt comfortable afterwards and invigorating. He seems to have given his pencil a complete holiday; for, saving a drawing of Harriet Haydon, on which he confesses he failed to please himself, he made no increase to his list of works; nor did the portrait which Lady Mulgrave hoped for, and which he probably never thought seriously about, occur to his memory. On the 28th we find him passing "through a hilly country, affording rapid glimpses of beauty; but these, beautiful as they were, are inferior to the view of Exeter, with its fine river and cathedral, and its fine villages cluster-

ing round it, mingled with plantations and groves." On his way home he halted to see Wells Cathedral, of which he says, "the choir is very rich and elegant, and, with the stained glass windows of the adjoining chapel, produced the most enchanting effect I ever witnessed. We rode next to Glastonbury, and saw the remains of the Abbey, said to be the oldest in England: the remains testify its ancient splendour."

He continued his journey by Bath, which he calls one of the finest cities he had ever seen; "certainly," he adds, "not so remarkable in its situation as Edinburgh; but the houses are richer in architecture, and better built:" and after having listened to much music, which he loved, from various instruments, he left Bath, and had the long way to London cheered by a talkative Scotchman, who told him droll stories of the various lands in which he had travelled. "One of his stories," adds Wilkie, "is worthy of being remembered.—'An Irish friend of his,' he said, 'was one day leaning carelessly over the parapet of a bridge in a town through which he was travelling, when a valuable ring dropped from his finger, and disappeared in the stream. Now, you must know that this stream was famous for its fish, and it was the custom to dress those which were newest caught for dinner; when he sat down to dine, a large fish newly caught was placed before him; and what do you think he found in its belly—the devil a thing but its guts!'" Wilkie arrived in London on the 3d of August, and immediately resumed his studies.

It was one of this great artist's maxims never to be idle: in the midst of a conversation, even on his

favourite pursuit, he would suddenly break off, and saying, "This is a sad waste of time," snatch up his palette, and recommence his work. Though he had resolved to fulfil his promise, and visit, early in harvest, Colcorton Hall, the residence of his steadfast friend Sir George Beaumont, he, in obedience to his own maxim, did not allow the intermediate time to fly idly by; he touched and retouched his picture of The Cut Finger; he reconsidered his sketches and separate groupings for The Ale House Door, and he visited Burnet oftener than once to see his progress with the plate of The Jew's Harp—the first of his works on which he ventured the graver. I say ventured, for it was not without consideration that he took any step connected with his works; and we have seen that he more than listened to the experienced counsel of Sir George Beaumont, to have none of his pictures engraved but by a masterly hand. That he thought well of the skill of his fellow-student, the entries in his Journal show:—"*August* 6th, Called on Burnet, and saw his plate of The Jew's Harp, which I examined very carefully, and was much pleased with it, as far as it is gone. He is engraving it in the most careful manner, and with a very close line, but very sharp and spirited withal. I know not how far I can depend upon the judgment that may be formed of it in its present state; but I think if he finishes it as he has begun, he will do himself considerable credit." As he worked at the plate, he looked too at the picture, and, as usual, saw something to amend or correct. On the 7th of August he writes, "Went over a good deal of The Jew's Harp to-day;"

and after holding another conference with Burnet on the plate, and touching it in several places, visiting Alexander Davison in prison, into which a law-suit had cast him, and looking at the new-erected bronze statue of the Duke of Bedford by Westmacott, and confessing his inability to see the merits of sculpture in dark metal so readily as in white marble, he set off for the seat of the Beaumonts, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, which, accompanied by Haydon, he reached on the 14th of August.

In the old castle of Southampton he had shared in the hospitalities of the noble family of Lansdowne, which, though circumscribed by the hermit-like character of the place, were elegant as well as pleasing; but in the more magnificent mansion of Coleorton, in society more akin to his own heart, and in scenes rendered classical by the muse of painting as well as of poetry, he experienced that still higher enjoyment which the intellectual alone can add to high descent and to elegant hospitality. This is a place of romantic beauty; the muses of the Beaumonts in the olden, and that of Wordsworth in these latter times, have united to render its groves, and lawns, and hills, and streams, renowned; while the soft rich sward which carpeted the lawns and slopes; the old woods and groves, with branches touching the backs of the wild deer which browsed below; the classic altars and vases which were to be found in the glades; the winding streams and unlooked-for waterfalls, — together with the agreeable conversations on painting and poetry, in which the accomplished owners indulged him, made a lasting impression

on the mind of Wilkie. I may now allow the great painter to relate his own story. I transcribe his own words.

JOURNAL.

"*August* 14th, Reached Colcorton Hall at 11 o'clock: Dance, who designed it, has acquitted himself well: we found it most spacious and magnificent. We were most kindly received by Sir George and Lady Beaumont. We entered first through a large portico into the lobby, which leads into a splendid hall lighted from the ceiling. Round the hall is a suite of rooms fitted up in the most elegant manner. The rooms above are chiefly bed-rooms, while at the top of all is the painting room of Sir George himself. We next went round the cottages in the neighbourhood, some of which I intend to make studies of. The country around is picturesque, and rather richly wooded; and, as we have the advantage of seeing it from an eminence, the distance softens it to the eye, and helps to render it less rugged than any other part of the country which we came through between this and London. —15th, Went and began a sketch of an old cottage close to the house. Continued painting till 3, and was visited once or twice by Lady Beaumont, also by an old gardener, whom I found to be a Scotsman, and a rather intelligent person. While at dinner we received the welcome news that Sir A. Wellesley had gained a complete victory over the French in Spain. Sir George read us during the evening a scene or two from one of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher.—

16th, Put in to-day the sky to the background of The Cottage.—17th, Began to paint in the winter-garden, and finished the sketch of The Cottage. I was to-day surprised by a voice which called me from the terrace; on looking up, I saw it was Mr. Whitbread and his family, who came from a tour through Derbyshire: they were very kind. I walked with them till we found Sir George and Lady Beaumont, who conducted them into the house and round the rooms: they saw the pictures, too, with which they were much pleased. We dined, and then walked out, and admired a scene, with all its trees, and water, and cottages, which was about half a mile from the house. Sir George read us, in the course of the evening, a few scenes from Shakspeare.—18th, Finished The Cottage sketch, and standing on the bank which overlooks the winter garden, I saw a distant landscape, broken by trees and cottages in the foreground, which seemed well calculated to accompany the sky which I had painted. When I had put it in, I took it into the house and compared it with Sir George's Rubens, and made such alterations as the study of that great master suggested. When we had dined, we took a walk to the farm-house, where we saw, besides some very fine trees, a pigeon house which I think will suit me exactly.—19th, Began to paint at 10 at The Gardener's Cottage, and continued till I finished the sketch which I began yesterday, though much interrupted by rain. In the evening I amused myself by looking, with Haydon, over Hogarth's prints, and Sir George read us Wordsworth's poem of "The Thorn."—20th. In a walk all round the fields we saw a farm-house with

a group of the most picturesque trees I ever beheld; nor did we fail to perceive that the farm-house itself was remarkably clean and neat. At the door of another house we found a draw-well, with household utensils beside it, arranged in such a manner that, if time allows, I shall make a study of it. In the evening Sir George desired all the servants to come in, when Lady Beaumont read to us part of the church service, and Sir George read a sermon. I was highly gratified with this devotional duty, which I had never before witnessed in any part of England.—21st, Had a walk with Sir George and Lady Beaumont in the fields this evening: looked through the telescope at the moon, which shone uncommonly clear. Sir George then read us that paper in the Spectator which gives an account of Sir Roger de Coverley's visit to the theatre.—22d, Went and painted from the group of trees at the farm, and made an useful sketch.—23d, Went to paint the well at the house which I saw on the 20th. The woman of the house allowed me to sit within the door; she talked incessantly to me all day; she was such a dame as I should suppose the neatherd's wife was who scolded Alfred about burning her cakes. Yet, for all her roughness of manner, she showed me much kindness. A young woman came in with a very beautiful countenance and a young child at her breast, daughter-in-law to the old woman. I succeeded in hitting off this little rustic scene to my satisfaction. When I returned, I found that Sir George had gone a great way in the picture he is painting for me. Sir George in the evening read us Addison's comedy of The Drummer.—24th, Painted for an hour

before breakfast at the window of The Gardener's Cottage. Sir George in the evening read us from Holinshed the account of Macbeth, which supplied Shakspeare with materials for his tragedy. The similarity of many of the circumstances, and some of the expressions, is surprising. — 25th, Made some sketches of various scenes: finished that of the well; and introduced it as a background to a sketch of Mrs. Knight, with whom I had a bicker about religion, very violent, yet very civil. — 26th, I began to paint, but as I was rubbing in the broken surface of a sandy road for a foreground, I was told that Lady Beaumont wished me to paint a gipsy-woman who was then in the house. I went at once: this woman seemed a singular character. I sketched in the head, and as her child lay sucking at the breast I put it in also, although it had nothing interesting in its appearance. I finished this sketch a good deal to my satisfaction, and for the first time tried the effects of yellow lake on the flesh, which even surpassed my expectations. It has the singular quality of giving a warm and fleshy tone without the heaviness which I have found inseparable from all other yellows. — 27th, Lady Beaumont requested me to read after breakfast Wordsworth's Preface to his Poems, which, with some of the poems to which it alluded, and a letter in the poet's hand-writing, I read accordingly; but could not be brought at all to coincide with the fundamental principles of his system, or to admire as elegant the pieces which are pointed out as examples of his style. This was not, however, the case with her ladyship, who admires Wordsworth's

productions next to those of Shakspeare and Milton. I rode with Sir George to the distance of three miles, where we saw some rocks which Haydon has been painting: they are both massy and rugged. We had a beautiful view from this spot of Coleorton and the more distant country. On our way home we passed an old abbey in ruins: the chief circumstance which renders it interesting is, that it is the birth-place of the celebrated Beaumont, who wrote in conjunction with Fletcher. After making some hasty sketches of these interesting ruins, and looking at some cottages which were very picturesque, we got home early in the evening."

Wilkie, with his companion, left Coleorton Hall on the 27th of August.

This visit was long held in remembrance. "The pleasure," says Sir George, "which your visit gave us will not soon pass from our minds, and I cannot but look forward with pleasure to the time you are to paint a picture here. I hope you will not defer it too long, for at my time of life, and with my constitution, it would be presumptuous to promise myself many years; as long, however, as it pleases God to spare my life, I shall be happy to see you. I hope you have finished your *task*, and are proceeding with the work of your *heart*." That the pleasure afforded was mutual, the following letter more than shows: —

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

My dear Sir, 84. Portland Street, Sept. 16. 1809.

I am delighted that our visit to Coleorton should be remembered by you with such expressions of satisfaction. To us it has been a constant and inexhaustible subject for conversation since our return, and, for my own part, I do not recollect any time I have spent with more pleasure, or reflected on with greater delight. I should on this account be very sorry indeed, should no future prospect present itself of another visit, and of painting your second picture at Coleorton; but for other reasons more important, though less interested than this, do I hope and pray, that health and long life may still be in reserve for you.

I expected the sketches would retain their softness for some time; the egg varnish will certainly prevent all bad consequences, and we shall esteem it a great favour if you will put it over them.

I was surprised to learn that the canvass and colours had not arrived, knowing that Haydon had ordered them to be sent more than a week ago, but, on making enquiry at Brown's, I found that he had, by mistake, sent them by coach to Dunmow, instead of Coleorton, ten days ago. We agreed, however, that they could be got as soon back from Dunmow as new ones could be prepared, and that if Brown wrote for them to-day, which he promised to do, they might come back on Monday evening, and be sent by the coach to Ashby on Wednesday. I shall call again on

Monday. We are very sorry that by this oversight you should be prevented beginning the work you had in view. I know what sort of disappointment it is that arises from *hope deferred.*

I think with much pleasure on the honour you have done me, by painting the picture of the bridge for me: I suppose you have now completed it. I have got so far on with the portraits that I expect to have them finished by the end of next week.

D. W.

With Wilkie's arrival in London a labour of a new kind awaited him; this was, to render himself acceptable to the members of the Royal Academy, and be admitted into their ranks as an Associate. One would suppose that genius alone, and those proofs of genius—works of a high order, were all that was necessary for this purpose. Far be it from me to say that such is not sufficient; but it sometimes happens, that all the members, even of the Royal Academy, fail to feel alike on the great question of merit, and those who continue obstinate require to be won or mollified by persuasive words, or the more persuasive courtesies of the table; and even when the best is done that the best can do, the election may not be unanimous. Members might be named, who won their election more through a fortunate legacy than their fine limning, and who were indebted more to the charms of their wine than their works for their admission among the Forty. Now Wilkie, as his Journal proves, readily and frequently admitted fellow-labourers in the cause of art to his breakfast and supper board; but a dinner,

and a dinner, too, to those accustomed to the splendour of titled men's tables, was in those days, perhaps, a flight beyond the means of Wilkie, or unsuitable to the condition of one who lived in lodgings of no lofty order; but though he resorted not to that easy but expensive species of persuasion, he did not disdain, though proud, to use other means; for it must be owned that he hoped for, as soon as he became of Academic age, the distinction of Associate. Nor is this said in reproach: he had achieved works above the ordinary standard by which the altitude of Associates are measured; therefore he deserved what he desired; and as he knew the influence which such marks of distinction have with the world, he did but justice to himself to seek it; and had it been withheld, he would have had reason to complain that his merit had been defrauded of its dues.

It is not uninstructive to trace the progress of Wilkie towards this distinction. His punctual attendance as a student had been observed by many of the academicians: the amenity of his manners had even touched the fierce Fuseli and the surly Northcote; while the vigour and variety of his genius — acknowledged by the mob — had at last exacted approbation from the Academy, a body ever afraid of giving undue influence to young merit by early praise.

Sometime in the early part of this year Fuseli, in his between jest and earnest way, advised Wilkie to put down his name as a candidate for the vacant Associateship: Farrington, with more sincerity, gave him similar advice: Sir William Beechey added his voice in private to

theirs; and in May, when the Exhibition opened, Phillips, (a candid man,) in a private conversation, advised him never to allow any one to persuade him to exert his influence with the council in the arrangement of the works of art; such a proceeding was clearly unconstitutional: he took the liberty of saying this, because, as he would soon become a member of the Academy himself, he would feel the disadvantage of such interference. Wilkie understood his courteous monitor, and bowed, and felt, he said, sure now of his election. On the 7th of July, while at Plymouth, he wrote to his friend Jackson, requesting him to cut his signature from the letter, and put it into the book of the Royal Academy, then opened for the names of candidates for the Associateship. Amongst those who thought he merited admission to the Academy we must place Nollekens, the sculptor, a blunt man, but a good judge, and fond of lending the help of a good word to the deserving. "Young man," said the unceremonious Joseph, "I expect soon to see you a member among the best on 'em — mind that." At length, on the 3d of November, Wilkie, after a conversation with Sir William Beechey, in which the latter told him that some of the academicians were so much displeased at his refraining from calling on them, that it was likely they would withhold their votes from him at the ensuing election, sallied out, and called on Farrington, Woodford, and Northcote: he found the two latter at home. Next morning he recommenced his "progress" among the brethren, and called on Flaxman, Sir Francis Bourgeois, and Sir William Beechey, whom he found at home. At Turner and Wyatt's

he left his card. Westall, Stothard, and Nollekens, received him, he said, with great kindness. West, Thomson, Howard, Shee, and Phillips, were either unwell, engaged, or out of town. With Copley, Tresham, Fuseli, Gandy, Richards, Cosway, and Smirke, he was more fortunate. "I concluded my day's labours," he adds, "by calling on Lawrence, Hoppner, and Dance, none of whom I saw. All these calls I accomplished between 9 and 4. Hoppner, I was sorry to learn, was ill, and growing daily worse." The election took place on the 6th of November, and next day the following communication came to him from the Academy:—

TO MR. D. WILKIE.

Sir, Royal Academy, Nov. 7. 1809.

I have the pleasure of informing you that, at the Assembly of the Academicians, held yesterday, for the election of two Associates, you and Mr. George Dawe were the successful candidates.

J. Richards, R.A., Secretary.

"I hope," said Sir George Beaumont, in the last letter of his quoted, "you have finished your *task*, and are now proceeding with the work of your *heart*." The task, we fear, refers to the portrait group of the Neave Family: the work of the heart, we doubt not, was the famous picture called The Alehouse Door: it has already dawned upon us in the sketch: we must follow it in the picture; the daily growth of the

flower of the field is not more natural, nor half so slow.

JOURNAL.

"*September* 29th, I this day began my picture of The Alehouse Door. After employing some time in preparing colours, I chalked it out on the canvass, to assist me in which I dotted out the picture and the sketch into several compartments. I began by rubbing in all the shadows with umber, and the lights with white, and succeeded in getting in the principal group.—30th, Mr. Neave came with his youngest daughter, whom he left with a lady to sit with me till two. I went on with the hand, which I had already begun, and tried a new way of proceeding, by touching the colour in a much more delicate manner, which produced a good deal of that mellowness which I have so often admired in Sir Joshua Reynolds; but though the hand is better painted, I fear it is scarcely so like as it was before. When my sitter went away, I recommenced the picture of The Alehouse Door, to which I added the landlord — the figure before him and the negro's head, which I took the precaution to soften down with the sweetener, to prevent the surface interrupting me in the finishing.

"*October* 2d, Began to paint after breakfast, and continued from that time till 4 on The Alehouse Door; put in the figures at the door of the house and those on the balcony above, which, with some alterations in some of the figures at the window was all I did to-day.—3d, Began to paint at 10; went on with

the woman leading her husband away, and put in the group of people paying the pot-girl behind, which occupied until 4. — 4th, I put in to-day the group of children in the foreground of the picture, the old woman behind the drunken man, and two figures going up the stair in the back-ground; the latter of which I altered from the sketch, by putting them further up the stair. — 5th, Put in the group with the man and the bagpipes in the back ground, and the figures on the staircase and in the windows in front of the picture. — 6th, Put into my picture to-day the tops of the houses, the trees, and the sky; after which I went over, with a coat of colour, the hands of some of the females, to get rid of the rough and starved appearance of the canvas. Had a call from Mr. Young, who brought me an impression of the plate from Sir William Beechey's portrait of me, to touch in some figures behind. — 7th, Had a walk on the Paddington road before breakfast, and began to paint at 9; but finding the head of the principal figure not dry, I did not proceed to finish it as I intended; I therefore went over a number of the hands with a second coat, to give them body and firmness, and concluded the day's work by making drawings of the hands of the man who is holding the principal figure. — 8th, Haydon came to breakfast, and approved of what I had done of my picture very highly. Went and saw Haydon's picture of Macbeth; he had laid it on in a very clear and brilliant manner, and had begun another sketch, which he had touched in with the general effect in a style that gave me a much higher idea of his powers for colouring and

handling than any thing I had yet seen of his. He has not yet succeeded with the figure of Macbeth; but his sketchings in of the Duncan and the youths are admirable. I left him in earnest debate with Whitfield and Calendar about the figure of Macbeth. Dined with Lord and Lady Mulgrave at Fulham.—9th, Callcott called, and made some observations on my picture of the Alehouse Door that may be of use: he thought the buildings behind rather too much broken, and that some of the lights which were not near the centre, should be kept down. Had a call from Andrew Wilson, who thought the figures in the fore-ground of the picture looked rather large. Was engaged to-day entirely painting the head of the principal figure, which has puzzled me beyond any thing, and I cannot get satisfied with it. Coxe called in the evening, and displayed great powers of conversation.—10th, Sent for an old man to come and sit; began to paint at 9, and continued till near 5, and went over the whole head I had failed in yesterday, and think I have been more successful. I put in the hat and neck of the figure also.—11th, The old man came at 9; he sat for the hands of the man pulling the principal figure, which I went over again, and did no more to-day. Dined with the Thistle Club; had some agreeable conversation of a local nature. I wished much to get a smock-frock to paint my principal figure in, but have not yet succeeded.—12th, The old man came at 10, and sat till near 4. I painted from him the left hand of the principal figure, and the two hands laid on his left shoulder, and the hand of the figure pulling him on the right. I had

a call from Mr. Dobree; he asked me to dine with him at Clapton on Sunday sc'nnight. Lord Mulgrave called, and wished me, as he had done before, to paint my own portrait sitting with a picture before me, which I might be supposed to be showing to the spectator; he repeated a wish, which he has often urged, that I should raise the price of my pictures. —13th, I began to paint from the old man Morely, who sat from 10 till 4. I painted in the coat of the figure pulling at the principal character, which I think I have succeeded in tolerably well.—14th, Had a walk before breakfast, and began to paint soon after 9. My female model came at 10, and I painted from her the neck and arms of the little girl pulling the principal figure homeward, but finding that a better model for the hair might be had, I rubbed it out again. Called on Haydon, and found him in strong debate with Whitfield and Eastlake, in which I took a part: Haydon has improved his picture much.—16th, Painted from models the petticoat and gown of the little girl pulling the principal figure in my picture. On my way home from town, I bought the smock frock for thirteen shillings which I so much wanted to work from.—17th, The old man Morely came, and I began to paint from him, and put in the legs of the man pulling the principal figure. Mr. Neave and his daughter Charlotte came; I put in her head-gear, and, if any thing, rather improved the group. Wrote to my sister Helen.—18th, Painted from old Morely; but while I painted, perceiving that my centre group did not unite naturally enough with the others, I resolved to alter the figure I had begun. I made a new arrange-

ment, and in the course of the day painted the figure entirely anew. Burnet brought me an impression of The Jew's Harp, with the writing at the bottom; saw Mrs. Jackson and her sister, who has a remarkably fine hand; I asked her to sit to me on Friday, to which she consented.—19th, Old Morely sat to me the whole day, and I put in the smock frock, all but the left arm, which I have reserved till the woman's hands are done. I put in also the foot of the principal figure, and the hand that comes behind his head. Had a call from Lady Margaret Cameron, who came to see the Neave picture; she seemed, on the whole, pleased with it.—20th, Mrs. Jackson and her sister came, when I began the hand of the principal woman of my picture from Miss Charlotte. Old Morely came as they went, and sat with me till I put in the head which is seen behind the group pulling the principal figure; I also put in the hand of the same figure holding the hat.—21st, Made drawings of hands to-day till eleven, when Mrs. Jackson and Miss Fletcher came; the latter sat to me till I went over the whole face of the principal female figure, but I could not get the character of the hand so well as that of the sketch; I was therefore obliged to rub out all that I had done these two days at the hand. On account of an indisposition arising from a cold, I dined at home, and employed myself during the evening in drawing hands for my picture.—22d, Made some changes in the arrangement of my Alehouse Door, which Haydon approved of.—23d, I went over from nature a great part of the little girl pulling the man by the hand; particularly the feet, and petticoat, and frock,

which I think I have improved. I then began on one of the hands of the woman holding the man's arm, but did not get it finished.—24th, Tried the effect of a bonnet hanging over the little girl's shoulder, which I thought looked very well. I went on with the hands of the principal female figure, which I finished, and afterwards tried to finish the face, which I think I have done tolerably well.—25th, Old Morely came, and I began to paint; I went over the whole of the smock frock and legs of the figure pulling him by the arm; and as far as the alterations go, they are an improvement.—26th, Old Morely came, and I began to paint the head behind the principal figure, which I finished, and went on with the clenched fist on the other side of the principal figure and the arm behind it. I endeavoured last of all to finish the face of the man pulling at the arm, but was obliged to rub out the whole I did.—27th, Took a walk in the morning; and after a drink of new milk, began to paint from old Morely, and touched on several places in the group behind the principal figure; when he went away, I painted from nature the neck of the principal female figure, with her cap and blue handkerchief, in which I succeeded tolerably well. Liston called, and I got him to sit for a few minutes in the attitude of the figure I intend for him in the picture.—28th, Had a walk to the dairy and began to paint the hair of the girl in the group, the handkerchief round the neck, the yellow gown and petticoat, in all of which I was tolerably successful.—29th, Went to church with my brother Thomas, and heard a very good sermon. Called at Hoppner's; he was rather better; saw a Vandyke,

which I think very fine. — 30th, Touched several parts of the first group till Liston came, and I began his head; he sat till three, and I got the head all put in, but not finished. After he went away, I laid in all the rest of the figures, which I improved very much in the disposition. I found Liston very agreeable; he talked on several subjects, and more particularly on the rise of the prices in the New Theatre, in which he very naturally inclined to the side of the managers. — 31st, Haydon called; he thought I should get a good deal more expression into Liston's face. Had a person from the public house over the way to sit, and I endeavoured to put in Liston's hands, but only succeeded with that one holding the bottle.

"*November* 1st. — I began with Liston's right hand, but could not at all succeed: I rubbed it out; tried again, with no better fortune. I then went on with the blue jacket, the left side of which I got in tolerably well: finished by making some sketches on paper for the picture. — 2d, Began to paint at 9; and as Morely was ill, sent for his old jacket, and began to paint from it, when Liston came. I began on his head, and went over it again, and put into it a great deal more expression than it had. Mr. Neave called, and proposed that his daughter a month hence should give me another sitting — no very agreeable prospect to look forward to. Put in part of my picture by candle-light. — 3d, My model came at 12, and I went on finishing the blue jacket. I began then to reconsider several parts of my picture — I am afraid the head I have painted from Liston is too large, and the figure altogether too thick: the hand holding the

bottle is certainly too large, and the bottle itself too small. — 5th, Coxe called, and read to me a poem which he had been writing. — 6th, The model came, and I went on painting from him the whole day, and put in the right hand of Liston's figure, and began to finish the head of him who is pulling the principal character. Made some different arrangements in my picture with candle-light. — 7th, Liston came, and sat for an hour: I went over part of his face, and put a little more drunkenness into the looks. — 8th, My old male model came, and I painted in the legs of the figure of Liston. Wrote to my father, saying that I was now an Associate of the Academy. — 9th, Began to the head of the landlord in my picture: the head occupied me all day; but I think I have got the character required. — 10th, Painted the hands of the landlord, which, with the bottle and glass, and part of the coat, was all I did to-day. — 11th, Went over all the body of the landlord. Had a call from Mr. Dawe, who stayed with me rather longer than I liked. Inquired at the Admiralty for Lady Mulgrave: I was sorry to find she was not recovering. — 12th, Sat during two hours to Robertson for my miniature. Sat some time with Northcote, and certainly admired his conversation a good deal. Called on Haydon, who told me he liked my landlord better than any other head I had painted. — 13th, Put in the hand and head of the young man opposite the landlord. — 14th, Began to paint from the black man, and continued till 4. I have painted the head not amiss, but too large, I fear. — 15th, Called to make my acknowledgments to the Royal Academicians for hav-

ing made me an Associate. On calling on Shee, whom I now saw for the first time, I was received by him in the most kind manner. I found myself obliged to rub out the black's head entirely; it was too large, and the figure too tall.—16th, The black came at 9. I kept him till 4; in which time I painted his head and right hand, and succeeded pretty well in both. I went to the shop of a Jew, and bought a pair of velveteen small clothes to paint from: I also bought a jacket and apron for the same purpose.—17th, Put in the jacket and apron of the young figure opposite the landlord. —18th, Put in part of the jacket, and painted the trousers and feet of the young figure opposite the landlord. Cleghorn called, and took away a proof impression of The Jew's Harp, for which he paid one guinea. Sat beside Haydon till he made a drawing of my hand.—20th, Painted in the legs of the black, but was not so successful with the trousers, having a bad material to copy them from. Made some new arrangements about the hands of the group. Went to the Academy, and heard a lecture by Carlisle on anatomy, which struck me as a very inefficient one indeed: he concluded by illustrating part of his subject with a drawing, which being in invisible ink excited great applause.—21st, Put in the left hand of the black, and the jacket; feel afraid that this figure is too large.—22d, Made an attempt to finish Liston's head, but did not succeed. I then put in the left hand of the back figure holding the glass, and that was all my day's work. Had a call from James Wardrop, who brought his sister with him.—23d, Old Morely came, from whom I finished the right leg of the back figure, and painted over the

apron of the landlord; went over the group of figures behind that of Liston, and made them a little smaller; rubbed out Liston's right hand, and made some drawings for the right hand of the young figure, which is unfinished.— 24th, Painted the foot and hand of the back figure, and the night-cap of the landlord. Made a slight drawing of the back figure, with alterations in the right arm and hand, which gives a great deal more spirit to the group. I made a drawing of a hand also for a figure behind.—25th, Succeeded in putting in the figure smoking the pipe behind the landlord. Tried the effect of the alteration of the arm of the back figure, but am not sure it will do.—27th, Began to paint from old Morely, and painted the figure looking in at the window, which I nearly finished. Liston came, and I went over the face, but I do not think I am succeeding well with it. Flaxman sent by me a one-pound note to the female model, till the council of the Academy should meet, when he promised to present a petition for her.—28th, Painted on the figure looking out at the window, and the head of the young man with whom he is conversing; made some sketches of the group in the balcony.—29th, Finished the young figure in the third group: did something to the figure looking in at the window, and painted some heads intended to be seen through the glass.—30th, Finished the figure talking to the landlady; saw Haydon, who told me, that in consequence of alterations he had made in his Macbeth, he intended to begin it anew, and had ordered a canvas for the purpose: he advised me to lessen the figures of the group I have just finished, which I intend to do. Had a note from

Mr. Richards, requesting my attendance at the Royal Academy to receive my diploma and sign my obligations.

"*December* 1st, Rubbed out the group at the window, and put in the old man looking in, from old Morely. Had a call from Seguier, who advised me to strengthen the figure sitting at the table. Went to the Academy, and was politely received by Flaxman, who read the obligation, which I signed, when I was presented with my diploma by Sir William Beechey, who acted as president in the absence of West: that done, I had the honour of shaking hands with the council; and so ended the ceremony. — 2d, Finished the young figure at the window. Painted over Liston's head, and altered the character quite: if I can keep the sort of head I have indicated, it will do. Made some changes in the arrangement of the figures at the door on the left-hand side of the picture. — 3d, Had an interview with Lord Mulgrave at the Admiralty; and helped Seguier to arrange the pictures and sketches I had painted. — 4th, Began to paint from a lusty woman, who sat to me all day for the head and neck of the landlady in my picture. I put in the parts pretty well. I laid in some grounds by candle light. — 5th, Painted the head I had intended for Liston, and put in a character which I think will do very well. Made a sketch on millboard of the figure in the blue jacket, to try how it would look in a different attitude. — 6th, Painted the head and hand of the man looking out of the window in the third group; and the hat of the man in the blue jacket; but have not done any thing to the legs.

Made a drawing of the landlady's hands for use to-morrow. — 8th, Painted to-day the legs of the figure in the blue jacket, which I think look tolerably well. — 9th, Painted till 2, and only succeeded in getting in the right hand of the figure in the blue jacket: Seguier called, and approved of what I had done, but wished me to keep the shadows as transparent as possible: went with him to Hope's, where I looked for a long time at the little Ostade, which astonished me very much: it seems to be produced by very thin and clear coats of paint. — 11th, Painted the blue jacket from old Morely. Had a call from Mr. Annesley, who desired me to get a frame for his picture of The Jew's Harp. The Earl of Essex called: I showed his lordship the picture, which he seemed to like a good deal, and said he should be glad of the refusal of it, which I told him I could not absolutely promise. As usual, touched upon my picture by candle light. — 12th, Painted in the figure behind the landlady at the door, but did not succeed with it. — 13th, Painted the head of the man drinking at the door, and his hands. Touched some parts of my picture, and proposed some alterations in the hands and head I had painted in the morning, namely, to make the man in the act of drinking the liquor, instead of holding it near his mouth. — 14th, Painted the hands and dress of the man sitting at the door of the public-house, and the coat of the man within the door. — 15th, Went over the hat of the back figure sitting at the table, and made the head look towards the black: rubbed out the right hand, and put it in holding a pewter pot, and touched part of the jacket;

which alterations have, I think, improved the figure very much. As it grew dark, I went over part of the figures in the balcony, for the purpose of lessening them. — 16th, Went over part of the pantaloons of the back figure sitting at the table, and altered them to a dark colour, which has improved much the effect of the group. — 18th, Finished the legs of the back figure at the table: painted over the hat of the figure in the blue jacket, which I think I have improved: painted over the left hand of the same figure, and made it hold the bottle higher up. — 19th, Painted to-day the hand of the man smoking behind the landlord, and went over a great part of the man behind the principal figure, to darken the shadows and strengthen the effect. I sketched in some hands about the principal group, which I think has improved it; and I propose, too, to alter the figure behind with the hat in his hand. Sketched in part of the group in the balcony. — 20th, Occupied from 9 till 3, touching in the drapery of the girl pulling the principal figure. — 21st, Painted the hand of the girl, and went over the face of the mother: I also went over the landlady's hands. — 22d, Painted the left hand of the man in the blue jacket and the bottle, which, with part of the hat behind, was all that I did to-day. — 23d, Painted to-day the feet of the girl, and part of her frock: Seguier sent me the etchings of Ostade. — 25th, Finished the child's frock, and did something to the feet of the principal figure. — 26th, Painted to-day the pot in the hand of the figure at the table. The black coming in at 11, I made him sit for the hand on the bottle. I also

glazed his head, and painted over the apron of the landlord. — 27th, Painted the head with the mouth open in the back of the principal group, and also the left hand of the same figure. — 28th, Put in the hands of some of the figures in the principal group from Morely, who sat all day. — 29th, Put in the great-coat by the side of the black: glazed the coat of the black, and painted in the petticoat of the landlady. — 30th, Principally employed in making amendments. Also painted in the head of the man with the pot in his hands."

This minute detail of work done, altered, rubbed out, restored, retouched, and finished, proves how hard this eminent man wrought for distinction; how he moved on in reputation, like the sunbeam on the wall, slowly and brightly. His toils were sometimes interrupted by communications of both a welcome and unwelcome nature. The best of his friends — Sir George Beaumont and Lord Mulgrave were of the number — reproached him frequently, as his Journal proves, for working at an under-price, and advised him to double the charges which he made for his sketches as well as his pictures. "I received," says Wilkie, "a note from Lord Mulgrave full of affectionate kindness; his lordship endeavoured to impress on me — while he sent me double the charge I had made — that I was doing myself great injustice by being so moderate, and that his sending me the enclosed was meant as an admonition to avoid such injurious disinterestedness for the future." There were others who were reckoned the friends of

British Art, who neither felt nor acted like Lord Mulgrave. Some, indeed, could not but know that the pictures which had brought fame to Wilkie had not brought wealth; that they were laboriously wrought out, were any thing but produced in haste, and had cost him much in models and in colours. To enable him to keep up executing these brilliant works, he had called to his aid portrait-painting, and had executed a few single heads and groups, such as Dr. Campbell, the Marchioness of Lansdowne, and the family group of the Neaves. The perverse Barry chose to hunger and thirst in the great cause of epic art; and Thomas Hope seemed desirous of starving a far finer genius, by driving him to the hitherto barren regions of the domestic drama, where Hogarth would have perished had not his right hand been skilful with the graver as well as the pencil. "Mr. Seguier called," says Wilkie*, "to deliver a message from Mr. Thomas Hope, which was, that he wished to withdraw the commission for a picture which he had formerly given to me. No reasons were assigned for this; but Seguier suspected that Hope had felt hurt by hearing that I was engaged upon portraits. If this be his true reason, I certainly feel less regret than if it had arisen from any other fault; for I think very little consideration might have shown him that I could not have begun to paint portraits voluntarily. Indeed, my principal object in undertaking them was to be enabled, with the money they brought, to do justice to my other works; for I might surely do myself

* Journal, September 12. 1809.

much less mischief by painting portraits for money than my other subjects." How Hope reconciled his treatment of Wilkie to his own sense of honour—for he was a high-minded gentleman — no one has told us. We regret the occurrence for the sake of a name from which we cannot withhold our respect. Let us continue the history of The Alehouse Door.

JOURNAL.

"*January* 1st, 1810. — Made some alterations in the composition of the hands in the principal group. Began to paint in the articles on the table, but succeeded only with the pewter pot; and touched the figure of the landlord, to bring him out from the back-ground; gave this morning thirty shillings to the two house-maids for their new year's gift.— 2d, Had a short walk before breakfast. Had a call, to my surprise, from Sir George Beaumont, who had come to town on a visit to Lord Mulgrave;—the picture is finished which he intended for me. I painted to-day the tumblers, plate, and table, which, if they are not rather crowded, are very well. I have thought of a different arrangement for the legs of the principal figure, but have not been able to make the change.—3d, The model came, on which I began to paint, and went over the coat of the figure with the pot in his hand, in the principal group; I altered the arrangement in the hands of the figure, which has improved the look very much. Painted in the left hand of the figure with the black hat.—4th, Painted the head of the woman in the balcony with the black bonnet. Had a call from Sir

George Beaumont, who urged me strongly to persuade Haydon to paint the figures in his picture on a much smaller scale; Sir George brought with him the landscape, which he had been so kind as to paint for me since I was at Coleorton; he has made altogether a very complete picture. — 5th, Painted in the head and hands of the second figure in the balcony. Called on Haydon, who said he had not seen Sir George Beaumont on the subject of his picture, but showed me a letter which he intended to send. I advised him, however, as it was a business of the most delicate nature, to consult Edridge, who I thought might give him right advice; saw his picture, and thought the Macbeth's head too large for the body. — 6th, Had a call from Haydon, who told me he had seen Sir George Beaumont, and had been entreated to paint him a smaller picture: he did not know, he said, what to do; but as I certainly believe that it would be of great advantage to Haydon to paint small, from the much greater demand there would be for his pictures, I told him if he could overcome his own feelings, and follow Sir George's advice, he was only sacrificing his own inclination to public opinion. — 7th, Saw Haydon, who said he had partly undertaken to Sir George Beaumont to make the picture smaller. — 8th, Touched a little on the figures on the balcony, and on the dress of the black. — 9th, Went in Mr. Neave's coach with my painting materials to Hampstead: and only succeeded in rubbing out a great deal of what I had formerly done. — 10th, Mr. Neave sent his servant to-day with a saddled horse to bring me to Hamp-

stead; went over the head of Henry Neave, and put in the dog by Mr. Sheffield Neave, which, I think, has improved the picture much.—11th, Went to Mr. Neave's and painted till near 4; but only succeeded in finishing the head of Miss Charlotte: I also put in her right hand, but did not get it done to my wish. —12th, Haydon came to breakfast; he told me he could not and would not paint the picture smaller than he had begun it, and was resolved to write to that effect to Sir George Beaumont. Went to Mr. Neave's, and got in the drapery of Miss Charlotte pretty well. —13th, Painted on the portrait of Mr. Henry Neave for three hours, and was not at all successful. Mr. Sheffield sat for a little; I made the hand less, and painted the ear.—15th, Painted from Mr. Sheffield Neave, and went over his hands, his coat, and his legs. Went to the Royal Academy, where I heard Soane's lecture on architecture, with which I was much pleased; came home with Haydon, who told me he had, after all, begun his picture on a small scale from policy rather than principle.—16th, To Hampstead, where I painted in the dog in the Neave picture, which occupied me all day.—17th, Called on Hoppner, and was told he was very ill; stopped at Colnaghi's, and inquired about the sale of the engraving of The Jew's Harp. I was told it sold very well; I saw an engraving from a picture by David, which certainly shows that painter to be no common man. Sold out stock for my present need, and have now remaining 100*l.* Called on Thomson, the painter; he showed me a picture he was painting from the Midsummer-Night's Dream, which I think promises to be very good indeed.—18th,

Went to Hampstead, and painted over the neck and gown of Mrs. Neave; went and dined at the Crown and Anchor with the members of the Royal Academy; Flaxman was in the chair.—19th, Painted the hands of Miss Charlotte Neave; stayed at home during the evening, and read part of the Edinburgh Review.—20th, Painted over Mr. Neave's coat, William Neave's face and figure, and darkened the shadow of his feet: in the evening looked over Ostade's etchings, which gratified me much.—21st, Called on Hoppner, and found him very ill.—23d, Painted on the Neave picture, and put Mrs. Neave into a satin gown; she had one made on purpose. Called on Miss Baillie, for my way lay past her door.—24th, Read a letter from a society in Yorkshire, proposing to establish an annual exhibition of pictures. Dined with the Miss Baillies; they received me with great kindness, and Joanna gave me a book to read, from which Shakspeare drew the plots of several of his plays.—25th, Painted on the portrait of Miss Caroline Neave, and went over her neck and pelisse; was engaged the rest of the day in making a sketch of Mr. Richard's dog on a piece of millboard. Mr. Neave proposed that I should go over part of the back-ground, and paint something in place of the screen and door, but this I most firmly resisted.—26th, To Hampstead, where I finished the reticule in Mrs. Neave's hand, and made the trousers of Sheffield Neave into a nankeen colour. Called on Charles Bell, who had been ill, but was now well.—27th, Painted in the stand for the clock in the corner of the Neave picture, and the tripod close by the window. Made, when I came home, a sketch with the

pen of my picture of The Alehouse Door, and tried an elevation in the staircase of the centre house.—29th, Was employed the whole day in touching various parts of the Neave family picture; I found, however, that I could not complete it to-day. Heard the lecture at the Academy, on architecture, by Soane, in which he showed us a great variety of drawings of buildings, ancient and modern, pointed out the faults and beauties of both, and, to my surprise, as well as that of most of the Academy, he exhibited, as specimens of gross incorrectness, portions of Covent Garden Theatre; for this he made many apologies, but, in my mind, they were not sufficient to excuse the impropriety of criticising severely a building so lately erected.—30th, Touched all day on the Neave picture, which, as far as my own opinion goes, brought it to a conclusion; I therefore brought away my painting materials.—31st, I resumed to-day my labours on the Alehouse Door; I painted the right hand of the man bawling out behind the principal group, and the head of the figure close behind the principal figure, which, with the darkening of the shadow under the feet of the group, and finishing the left foot of the leading figure, formed my day's work.

"*February* 1st, Painted on the head of the figure offering the glass to the girl on the balcony. I succeeded also in painting in the hands of the same figure. I have been considering the propriety of bringing down the arm of the girl, instead of its being held upright. Had a call from Mr. Neave, who gave me a draft for 100*l.*, in addition to the 100*l.* I had before from him in payment of the group of portraits.

—2d, Painted in the young figure with the pipe in his hand on the balcony, the head-dress on the other side of him, and the dress of the man offering the woman a glass of spirits. Had a call from the Earl of Essex, who seemed to like what I had done; and a call from Mr. Callcott, who approved of what I had done, and what I proposed to do, to the houses in the back-ground: he thought the little girl in the principal group rather thin for her apparent age, and advised me, upon the whole, to avoid getting too much subject into my picture.—3d, Put in the figures on the balcony in my sketch as I had done them in my picture. Had a girl for a model, and put in the boy looking through the railing on the balcony from the girl, which did tolerably well. Called on Haydon, and consulted him about the propriety of painting another picture for the Exhibition, which he advised me to do.—4th, Was told of the death of Whiteford, which happened last night. Called on Shee, who asked me if I had any intention of starting for the honour of being elected an Academician: I assured him I had not. He said, I might rely on his vote whenever I chose to come forward. Soane, he said, would not lecture to-morrow night, in consequence of that part of his last lecture which alluded to Covent Garden Theatre being found fault with by the Council.—5th, Was engaged for the greater part of the morning making a sketch of my picture, with the amendment of a different staircase in the back-ground. I began at 1 to paint the great-coat hanging over the railing of the balcony. I also sketched in the legs of the boy hanging through the railing. Callcott came, and

looked over the etchings of Ostade with me.—6th, Tried different effects in the sketch I began yesterday; made a pretty good composition, but am uncertain of adopting it in preference to my first idea. I then began with the picture, in which I made a slight alteration in the boy sitting on the balcony, which has improved it much. I began the bird-cage, and part of the portico, which I carried on a little way.—7th, Put in the head, hands, hat, and coat of the figure searching his pocket at the table behind the principal group. The Miss Baillies wrote to inquire, on the part of a friend, if I would undertake to paint a family group of portraits: answered, that my engagements at present precluded me from undertaking such a commission.—8th, Painted from old Morely the legs of the figure searching his pocket, and sketched in the feet of the figure behind.—9th, I did nothing but make arrangements for the group on the right of the principal figures. I have not settled it yet; but I think it is much better than it was. Wrote to Sir George Beaumont an answer to his letter of this day, in which he gives me directions about the conduct of my picture of The Alehouse Door.—10th, Painted in the legs and went over the face of the boy in the balcony, which I have improved very much.—12th, Was employed the most of the day in making the sketch on a panel of the man with the girl's cap on (The Wardrobe Ransacked); and afterwards, in trying different arrangements in the sketch of my large picture. A gentleman called and proposed that I should make designs for a new edition of Don Quixote; I said I thought I could not undertake it; he wished me to think of it.

—13th, Tried to make a sketch of the back-ground, and afterwards went on with the shadow of the man in the blue jacket, and painted over the feet of the table; to all of which I have given more force. Had a call from Burnet, whom I had not seen for a long time.—14th, I began to paint the hand of the man with the girl's cap on in the sketch of that little subject, but did not get the hand all done.—15th, Went on with the sketch of the man with the girl's cap on; succeeded in painting the man's hand, and the girl's hand and arms.—16th, Had a Valentine to-day, from whom I know not; but certainly in the same handwriting as one I received formerly. Began on the sketch of the man with the girl's cap on, which I carried on a considerable way.—17th, Painted all day on the sketch of The Man with the Girl's Cap, which I advanced much, and gave it a considerable degree of force. Had a call from Captain Robertson, son of Mr. Robertson, minister of Ratho; I was very happy to become acquainted with him.—18th, Called on Haydon, who was much at a loss whether to begin his picture anew from a new sketch, which he showed me, or go on with the old plan: I urged him strongly to proceed with the old in preference. Wrote a letter to my sister Helen.—19th, Altered the arrangement of my sketch of the man with the girl's cap on, by putting more shadow behind the man. Went to the British Forum, attracted by the question of, Whether the late conduct of Windham or of Yorke was most reprehensible? A very stupid man began the debate: several members spoke; I was much disappointed on the whole with the discussion: there was a total ab-

sence of sound argument, and an excess of abusive declamation.—20th, Haydon called; he doubted the propriety of my painting a small picture, such as The Man with the Girl's Cap, for the Exhibition. Irvine (a painter) called, and mentioned, as an inducement for me to proceed with my small picture for the Exhibition, that an Academician said if I exerted myself, I might in all probability be elected an Academician next year. Called on Seguier, and mentioned the objection of Haydon to my going on with the child's cap picture, as well as my own doubts on the subject: he went and looked at the picture, and approved of it, particularly for its strength of effect: this has determined me to go on boldly.—21st, Went over some parts of the sketch.—22d, Employed most of the day rubbing in the picture of the Man in the Girl's Cap; I afterwards made a drawing of his right hand.—23d, Finding what I had done to my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap on not quite dry, I went on with the picture of The Alehouse Door. I went over part of the principal group, to give it strength; over some parts of the girl's dress; the legs and foot of the man; the woman's petticoat: to all of which I gave much more strength.—24th, Could not get a right model for the picture of The Man in the Girl's Cap, and was obliged to work on The Alehouse Door. I went over that part of the house behind the principal figures, and over the portico and the cage.—25th, Called on West, whose pictures I was highly pleased with; his powers of composition seem astonishing: he gave me a long and particular account of his manner of working. Dined with Lord

and Lady Mulgrave.—26th, The model came, and I painted from him part of the hand of The Man with the Girl's Cap: I did in the absorbent ground, but did not get it completed. Went to the Academy, where Fuseli gave us an excellent lecture on the present degraded state of art; saw Phillips and Callcott, the latter of whom I congratulated on his accession to the higher honours of the Academy.—27th, Went over great part of the man's hand in the girl's cap, and found great benefit from the use of the absorbent ground. I afterwards went over the girl's cap which he has on his head. Went to the Academy, and proceeded with my drawing.—28th, Had a call from Burnet, and a brother of his who has been at the Walcheren expedition. Called on Farington, who introduced me to Lord de Dunstanville. I saw Haydon, who told me he approved much of the hand I had begun in my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap.

"*March* 1st, Succeeded in painting in the head of the man with the girl's cap on. Saw, in a call at Miss Singleton's, a very fine head, unfinished, of Sir Joshua's.—2d, Did in the head of the girl in the picture of the man with the cap. Had a call from Mr. Duddingston, who had been in India, and lived some time in my brother's house. Went to the Academy, where Thomson told me, he understood that Raeburn was coming to London, and that Hoppner's house was to be taken for him.—4th, Sat to Robertson for my picture; saw in the possession of Mr. De Lahont a Titian, which I thought very fine; The Adoration of the Magi, by Rembrandt, very fine. But what surpassed all was a

Holy Family, by Rubens; the colouring of which was wonderful, and the way in which the body of St. John was painted and touched beyond all description. Saw Sir William Erskine, who said he would give me 150 guineas for the picture of The Penny Wedding, which I was to paint for him. I thought his offer liberal.—6th, Went over the face and arm of the man with the girl's cap on.—7th, Seguier told me, he thought the coat of the man with the girl's cap on was much too bright a yellow for the flesh: I shall paint it over again. Went to the Academy, and drew till 8. Haydon showed me a sketch of a new picture from Romeo and Juliet, which he intends for the Exhibition.—8th, Painted to-day on the sleeve of the girl in my picture of the man and cap, and also touched in her neck. Sharpe showed me his engraving of Copley's picture of the Siege of Gibraltar, which I thought a fine specimen of workmanship. He sat with me long, and said that he believed Brothers to be the second Jesus, foretold in Scripture, and Johanna Southcote a true prophetess, who spoke from inspiration. He is altogether a singular mixture of talent and absurdity.—9th, Painted over all I had formerly done to the coat of the man in the child's cap. I have lowered the tone of the coat very much, which has greatly improved the look of the flesh. Lord de Dunstanville called, and seemed to like The Alehouse Door as far as it had gone. Had a long conversation with Thomson, the Academician, about Soane's conduct in the Academy, which seems, from his account, to have been very odd.—10th, Had a call from Lister Parker, who told me he wished his picture to be painted the

size of 20 by 17 inches. Thomson, R. A., called, and saw my pictures, which he seemed pleased with, and advised me to paint with wax.—11th, Sydney Smith gave us a sermon to-day on toleration, which seemed entirely directed to the state of the Catholics of Ireland; but he conceded that to the Catholics, which I remember in another sermon he refused to the Methodists.—12th, I painted to-day the under petticoat and foot of the little girl in my picture of The Man and the Cap.—13th, Painted the red waistcoat, the blue apron, and part of the breeches of the man with the girl's cap on. Went to the British Gallery, where for the first time I saw the pictures; met Hilton and other artists. Went to buy some wax from Barclay in the Haymarket, who, on learning who I was, insisted on my acceptance of a large quantity as a present.—14th, Painted in the legs of the man with the girl's cap on; had a model with me all day.—15th, Painted most of the day on the face of the girl in the little picture. Went to the Academy, where Fuseli discoursed very eloquently on the characters of Titian, Tintoretto, and Rubens.—16th, Haydon came to see my picture, but did not approve of the alteration I had made in the girl's head and arm; painted over the girl's head, which I think I have improved.—17th, Touched on the head of the girl, and the hand taking hold of the man's coat, but have thought of making a different arrangement with the other hand, and of putting a shawl about his shoulders. Went to Knightsbridge and took possession of my new lodging.—18th, Found myself uncomfortable from the scantiness of covering on the bed, and had no sleep

all night.—19th, Put in the elbow of the left arm of the girl, and also went over the neck; I tried to-day an experiment of painting with plaster of Paris to restore the ground, which, on being painted over again, produces a wonderful effect. Had an admirable lecture at the Academy from Fuseli on invention.—20th, Painted in the shoulder and part of the arm of the little girl in my picture of The Man and the Cap. —21st, Painted in the right leg of the man with the girl's cap on, and resolved on putting the girl's arm as it was at first, with a shawl over the shoulders of the man.—22d, Painted from 9 to 4, during which time I was engaged on the left hand and shoulder of the girl; made some alterations in the shawl. Had a call from Mr. P., who desired to know what the price of The Alehouse Door would be; I said I could not tell yet. He said, a friend of his wished to know whether I expected more than 200 guineas for it; I answered that I should not think myself paid at that price.—23d, Painted without interruption till 6 o'clock, and dined at home. I painted over again the man's right hand, and in putting in the blue drapery coming over the arm.—24th, Painted in the basket with the things in it.—25th, Had a card to dinner to-day from Lord Mulgrave; went, and met Seguier and Haydon.—26th, Painted part of the chest of drawers and the straw bonnet; had a call from the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne, also from Sir George Beaumont; they saw the picture I am now painting.—27th, Painted in the looking-glass. Saw two portraits by Vandyke, very fine indeed, which bear strong marks of having been painted on absorbent

grounds. I was told that Sir Joshua Reynolds never used absorbent grounds.—28th, Varnished parts of the picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap.—29th, Had a model sitting all day, from which I touched various parts of my picture.—30th, Painted from 9 till 5 on The Man with the Girl's Cap.—31st, Went over the legs of the man, and I think have bettered them.

"*April* 1st, Painted on my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap.—2d, Had a call from Lord Harcourt, who appeared pleased with my picture. Sir George and Lady Beaumont called, when the former told me he had found a name for my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap,—'No Fool like an Old Fool.'—3d, Painted all day at my picture; put in the bottom part of the chest of drawers and the room floor.—4th, Did all over the white sleeve and the two hands, and wrote a letter to my father.—5th, Began to paint at 10, and continued till 6. Had a call from Seguier, who seemed to like my picture, but disapproved of its being painted on an absorbent ground. Called on Haydon, and met with Geddes, just come from Edinburgh. Took my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap to the Admiralty, and showed it Lord and Lady Mulgrave, and compared it with some of the Flemish pictures, which made it look rather raw in the colouring: I then took it to the Royal Academy, and left it for the Exhibition, with a note containing the title, which I made 'A Man teasing a Girl by putting on her Cap.'"

CHAPTER IX.

WILKIE PAINTS "THE WARDROBE RANSACKED," AND SENDS IT TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.—ADVISED TO WITHDRAW IT. — EARLY FAME OF EDWARD BIRD. — EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL. — COMPLETION OF "THE VILLAGE FESTIVAL."—CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT. — OBLIGED TO REFRAIN FROM PAINTING THROUGH ILL HEALTH. — DR. BAILLIE AND JOANNA BAILLIE'S KINDNESS. — WILKIE AT HAMPSTEAD AND DUNMOW. — ELECTED A ROYAL ACADEMICIAN.

I HAVE now traced the conception and progress of that true national picture, The Village Festival, through the clear and minute record of the artist's own Journal, till the time when, touched by a new fancy, or swayed by one in whose taste he trusted, he laid it aside and took up that of The Man with the Child's Cap, one of the happiest of his smaller compositions. The deference which he pays to the opinions of his friends, the labour which their remarks occasion, and his anxiety to attain the perfection arising from uniting happy labour with consummate skill, must have been apparent to all; nor can it have escaped notice, that The Village Festival was not laid aside for the lesser picture, till the arrival of the letter from Sir George Beaumont, to which allusion is made in the Journal, and which we shall now introduce into the narrative. "When you consider," says his accomplished friend, "how much I am interested in the success of your picture, The Village Festival, you will, I am sure, pardon the trouble I give you. All that part which

would be impossible to others you will execute with ease. I am only afraid, from want of practice in these things, the sky and back-ground may cost you some trouble. But how essential are those to the effect of the whole: to give them their due proportion of spirit with a proper degree of subordination—to make them, as it were, a bed for the main part of the picture—to place the lights and shades in such places as will animate without disturbing the whole, is a task far more difficult than is generally imagined; and I think even the best of the Dutch and Flemish painters failed frequently in this respect, and rather injured than assisted their pictures by their back-grounds. My notion is, that your sky should be grey, silvery, and tender—by all means a vivid, a predominant blue: blue-black, or at most a small mixture of ultramarine ashes, will make it as blue as it ought to be, otherwise it will not keep its place, will catch the eye, and injure the effect of the figures. I have a small landscape by Teniers, the sky of which is nearly the colour I should recommend, and if you think it will be of any use, I will send it to you. Should you fail the first time, I cannot help recommending a restoration of the ground; as far as my experience goes, it is impossible to paint light grey upon light greys, and light blue upon light blues, without producing insipidity or heaviness. Excuse the liberty I take, and believe me to be, with true regard and esteem, your sincere friend."

That Wilkie felt the truth of these observations, appears from his laying The Village Festival for a time aside, and turning his pencil to a less laborious

task, that he might keep his name before the public through the influence of the Exhibition. To have the air and sky in unison with the festive groups below, seems to have been the desire too of the judicious Callcott, who interested himself in the landscape portion of the picture. The mirth, the humour, the progress of rustic joy towards dissipation, were safe, they felt, in the hands of Wilkie, who, a great master of propriety in all things, observed it scrupulously in matters of a moral nature. To give a pleasing image of English enjoyment, it was necessary to come to the open air with pipe and pot; the open air demanded a clear sky and a bright sun, and of these auxiliaries the artist was scarcely yet master. Time was, he felt, required — time he resolved to take; and trusting that the little picture of The Man with the Child's Cap would find such a place as its merits deserved in the Exhibition, he took it, as it appeared, without any thing like misgiving.

While Wilkie was wondering at the madness of the mob, who, resenting the committal of Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower for a libel on the House of Commons, poured their wrath on the houses of Lord Wellesley and Lord Castlereagh, a note was put into his hand from his friend Sir George Beaumont, requesting to see him on something of importance. "I went at once," says Wilkie in his Journal, "to Grosvenor Square, where I saw Sir George Beaumont, who told me that West had waited on him, and expressed a wish that I should withdraw from the Exhibition my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap, for it was considered not equal to my other productions. I said,

that the disgrace of withdrawing a picture was probably greater than the harm which exhibiting it could do me, but that I should consult some of my friends in the Academy about it. I called on Shee at the Academy, who told me that the prevailing opinion amongst my friends in the Council was, that it would be prudent to withdraw it; I consented to withdraw it accordingly. I then went to Haydon's, where I saw Fuseli, who said that they could not find a place for Haydon's picture in the great rooms, and went away; next day Haydon called, and told me he had withdrawn both his pictures from the Exhibition."

There have been various opinions expressed of the judgment which the Royal Academy passed on this picture. The public have not withheld their admiration because of the censure of the Council. It is true that, in dramatic interest and variety of character, it cannot compete with The Village Politicians, The Blind Fiddler, or The Rent Day; and this is probably what was meant: nevertheless it is a fine picture, rich in humour even to overflowing. The title of "No Fool like an Old Fool," supplied by Sir George Beaumont, expresses the subject better than that of The Wardrobe Ransacked—a name afterwards found for it—or than that of The Man with the Girl's Cap, which it commonly receives. The picture is composed of two figures—the one an old man of a joyous and humorous nature, who, teased perhaps with a niece or grand-daughter's youthful love of finery, has plucked her favourite cap from her wardrobe, put it fantastically upon his head, and, with her scarf about his shoulders, struts about the room imitating the

step and demeanour of some mincing court-bred madam, "with nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," while the child, a little girl, in a mood between mirth and vexation, follows to snatch her finery from him, and stretches her arms, much too short, to reach the cap which hangs awry on his brow. It is one of those little natural and happy things which, like The Jew's Harp, the painter found, not in song, but in observation and society, which all feel as well as understand.

But the cause of the withdrawal of this picture from the Exhibition has been imputed by some to the rising fame of Edward Bird, whose pictures, formed in the same domestic and familiar walk of life and manners as those of Wilkie, had already attracted much attention. Bird's Game of Put, and his Village Choristers, which he sent to the Exhibition, were in the eyes, it seems, of the Council, more than a match for Wilkie's Man with the Girl's Cap, and in a fit of satisfaction or alarm they advised, as we have seen, its withdrawal. The Scotsman had reigned three years, and some of his brethren who disliked him for the sudden fame he had achieved, saw without a sigh that reign about to close; others, whose walk was in the high historic, beheld with pleasure the downfall of the pan-and-spoon style, as they scoffingly called that of Wilkie: even the great painter himself, a timid and diffident man, was for a time daunted, and silently, and in his own quiet way, resigned his place to the new candidate. We have seen when Cromek introduced Bird to Wilkie, the latter liked his compositions much; but that, on a second examination, he abated his admiration a little, and I remember, when I saw

Cromek in London during the spring of 1810, he spoke to me of Bird as a genius who had already conquered Wilkie with his own weapons, and concluded his eulogium by saying, "Gad, Sir, he's predestined to humble your tall thin countryman, who is as silent as the grave, and as proud as Lucifer."

Bird, in his happiest moods, never reached the vigour of character, the dramatic skill, or the fine proprieties of Wilkie; but this was hid at the time from the eyes of almost all the friends of the latter: the Council of the Academy advised him to retire from the contest, and come, if he could, to the next Exhibition in greater strength. That men of taste, experienced, too, in art, with the best pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools before them when they spoke, could see in the best pictures which Bird had yet painted aught to make the painter of The Village Politicians, The Blind Fiddler, or The Rent Day alarmed for his laurels, seems most strange: there could be no doubt that the picture, which he too rashly withdrew, though limited in subject, would have maintained Wilkie's position in art, and kept its place against all opposition. He began to feel this when it was too late to retrace his steps; and he felt, too, that it was safer to follow his own bent than the advice of forty counsellors.

On the very day on which Wilkie yielded to this advice he recommenced his studies on the picture of The Alehouse Door, and also on the picture he had withdrawn from the Exhibition. I use his own words: —

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"*April* 9th, Painted from 12 till 5, and went over the figure of the man searching his pocket, in my picture of The Alehouse Door, and made it a more suitable colour.—10th, Painted in from nature the dog running before the principal group.—11th, Went over very thinly several of the hands in the principal group.—12th, Went over the young man sitting at the table on the left of the picture, which I have relieved considerably from the objects around; and I rubbed out part of the body of the black, to give it greater clearness. I painted from life the head of the pot-girl.—13th, Had a call from Seguier, who advised me to do something to The Man with the Girl's Cap, which I had withdrawn from the Exhibition, to make it as perfect as possible, and get rid of the imputation of its being an inferior picture.—14th, Painted from 10 to 5, and was wholly occupied on the sketch of The Man with the Girl's Cap, which I tried to alter in the effect and colour, and to introduce more subject. Sketched in a dog in the corner, but did not succeed in getting it to my mind.—16th, Went over, from nature, the face and neck of the girl in the sketch of the same picture.—17th, Put a black silk cloak on the man in my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap, and think it a great improvement. Lord de Dunstanville called, and said that if it was not engaged he should like to have it.—18th, Painted in the fur on the black silk cloak, and part of the blue lining. Had a call from Sir George Beaumont, whose permission I asked to have The Blind Fiddler en-

graved: he consented, and agreed that Burnet, who is to engrave it, is to have the picture on his going out of town. — 19th, Painted the left side of the silk cloak. Had a call from Hilton, to look at my little picture. — 20th, Was employed all day with the legs of the man in my little picture: have put gaiters on him, which is an improvement. — 21st, Haydon called to-day, and seemed to dislike my picture, and wished me to paint over the girl's head again. He took me to Collins's, where I saw two pictures painted twenty years ago by an Irishman, now dead, which Haydon talked a great deal about before I saw them, and raised my expectations probably too high: one is a travelling priest preaching in a barn; the other an Irish wake: they display a great deal of humour, and in several parts show good drawing; but it is only with the allowance of their being done by a person who never saw a picture in his life, that they deserve the high encomiums which Haydon and Collins bestowed on them. But I must confess that I do not think the opportunities of the artist have been so very small as it is said; and from the number of pictures I have seen of almost equal merit, by a young artist who never afterwards improved, I am inclined to doubt whether the painter had all the genius they are willing to allow him. Painted in the hands of the girl in The Man and the Cap — the right hand I think successful. — 23d, Had a call from Lord de Dunstanville, who agreed to take the picture when it should be finished of The Man with the Girl's Cap. — 25th, Painted again, from life, the girl's head in my little picture: I altered it considerably in expression, and

made the hair light. Burnet called to consult about engraving The Blind Fiddler: Harrison of Boydell's house, he said, had proposed to give me fifty guineas for my share, if I would give my name and assistance the same as if the concern was my own. I said the offer was liberal.—26th, Went over again the cap on the man's head: painted over the door behind the man, and made it much darker. Jackson called, and said that his wife had a legacy left by an uncle, which he expected would amount to 500*l.*; which I was glad to hear. Seguier called, and advised me to close with Harrison's offer respecting the engraving of The Blind Fiddler.—27th, Went over the deep shadow in the door behind the man. Went to the Royal Academy, and as I entered I received a ticket of admission to Turner's gallery, with his compliments. I looked at various pictures, and took particular notice of Bird's, which, for expression of his figures, and execution of his utensils, are very great; but, upon the whole, they strike me to be deficient in painting and colour: his flesh is heavy, and he seems to have no idea of keeping in the general effect. They exhibit, however, a very great effort. Owen, Shee, Thomson, and Phillips, shine much in portrait; and Turner and Callcott are, in my opinion, fully equal to their former excellence. I saw many academicians, strangers to me.—28th, Had a call from Jackson and Constable; and after they were gone, from Lawrence, who seemed very much pleased with the picture I am at present painting (The Alehouse Door). He inquired if I intended it for Angerstein, which I said I in some measure did: he was among the first on my

list: he said he would mention that to him. Went to the Royal Academy, where I found many people: Mr. Perceval, with several more of the ministers and members of the opposition. I sat next Pye, the Poet Laureate, on the left of the President. Came away with Stothard.—29th, Went over the girl's head from life, and over the shadow behind. Had a call from Angerstein to see my picture of The Alehouse Door, which Lawrence had told him of: he seemed to like it very much, and said he should be glad to have it. He observed there was still a great deal to do to it, and that he would be happy to let me have some of the money—say a hundred pounds or so—to go on with, which I consider a very kind offer. Had a call from a person of very rough manners, whom I afterwards found to be Jack Fuller, the facetious member for Surrey. Burnet called, and told me that Boydell would give fifty guineas for my share of profit on the engraving of The Blind Fiddler.

"*May* 1st, Took the picture of The Blind Fiddler to Burnet's. Had a call from Vernon the picture dealer, who made the strange proposal that I should advise Lord Mulgrave to purchase his two pictures of The Siege of Valenciennes, for Government to hang up in public places. I gave him no hopes of success in any such mission.—2d, Seguier called, and on looking at my little picture, said he thought the Academy had used me very ill in requesting me to withdraw it, for he thought my name would receive no injury from its being placed beside Bird's pictures, which he thought had been greatly overrated. Dined

at Sir George Beaumont's, where I met Thomson, Owen, and Callcott, with whom I spent a pleasant evening.—4th, Had a call from Burnet, who brought me the bill for 52*l.* 10*s.* from Boydell, as a consideration for my allowing him to engrave The Blind Fiddler.—5th, Sir George Beaumont took me to see a fine picture by Jan Stein of The Inside of a Hall, with People feasting; and two pictures by Ostade, which I thought the finest I had seen of that master. Seguier called, and I asked him what price I should put on my little picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap; was 100 guineas too much? He said no; for he thought I could not ask less.—6th, Dined with Lord de Dunstanville.—7th, Called on Sir George Beaumont, who said he thought the engagement I had made with Boydell was disadvantageous; but I told him I thought it quite otherwise; before I left him he made me promise, as he considered himself in my debt for The Blind Fiddler, to give him an opportunity of discharging it, by painting him another picture, if possible, next summer. Glazed and skumbled over several parts of the little picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap. Had a call from a Mr. Phillips (now Sir George), who commissioned me to paint him a picture, for he was making a Collection of the English School; he resides in Lancashire.—8th, Went to see Turner's Gallery: he has a very fine picture of the Lake of Geneva, several sea-pieces, and a view of Linlithgow Castle; the latter painted for the Mr. Phillips who called on me yesterday. I thought this one of his best pictures. He has, however, The Fall of a Glacier, which is too unde-

fined for public taste. I was employed most of the day on the floor of my little picture, and introduced some ribbons to break the flatness of it. Had a call from General Ramsay, the descendant of Allan Ramsay, the poet, who staid some time.—9th, Painted from 9 till 3, and glazed in the flesh of my sketch of The Man with the Girl's Cap.—10th, Chiefly employed on the sketch of my little picture. Wrote to Burnet, and made over to him the privilege of engraving my picture of The Blind Fiddler. Geddes, Burnet, Eastlake, and Jackson came in the evening to supper.—11th, Had a young lady for a model, who was rather timorous, and Mrs. Coppard sat in the room to give her confidence; painted in the head of the pot-girl in my picture of The Alehouse Door, much to my satisfaction. I also improved the general effect of my small sketch. Had a call from Andrew Wilson, who subscribed for a print of the Blind Fiddler.—12th, Had a call from Raeburn (the painter), who told me he had come to London to look out for a house, and to see if there was any prospect of establishing himself. I took him, by his own desire, to see Sir William Beechey, who asked us both to dine with him to-morrow, which I was obliged to decline, being pre-engaged.—13th, Called on Raeburn, and called with him on several artists, who happened to be from home, or engaged.—14th, Had a call from Bird, who came to town two days ago.—I did not show him any of my pictures. Lord de Dunstanville called; he saw my little picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap; I told him the price was one hundred guineas, which he said he would send me,

and the picture might remain with me till next year, as he was going out of town. Had a call from Earl Grey, who seemed to like my pictures much, and gave me a commission to paint him one.—15th, Made some drawings of hands; painted the right hand and coat and waistcoat of the man making love to the pot-girl in The Alehouse Door.—16th, Wrought on The Alehouse Door, and put in the left hand of the man making love to the pot-girl, and the dress of the man drinking.—17th, Painted the legs of the man making love to the girl, and the figure in blue behind.—18th, Busied all day making preparations for the figures in the staircase: I tried the effect of figures going up straight into the picture, and the most of the stair turning to the right. I put a man sitting by himself on the right of the stair in a thoughtful mood. Had a call from Sir George Beaumont, who had been ill for some time: saw Haydon, whom I wished joy on his gaining the premium at the British Gallery.—19th, Reconsidered my Alehouse Door, and thought of a new way for the staircase.—21st, Hit upon an alteration in the large window and staircase in the back-ground of The Alehouse Door, which has produced a wonderful improvement. I have moved the window much lower down; also the stair to the right hand of the picture, and the composition is made to flow with great ease to the end. I also made the figure beckoning the girl under the window. Raeburn called, and I accompanied him to Newman Street, where we saw Stothard: Lord de Dunstanville was so kind as pay me for my picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap; Haydon

came, and approved much of the alterations I had made in The Alehouse Door, and while he was with me Lord Mulgrave sent me a cheque for ten guineas for the sketch of Lord de Dunstanville's picture.—23d, Put some figures in the window of the background of my picture.—24th, Went to the Exhibition in the evening. I looked at and liked the drawings of Varley, Dewint, and Heaphy: the industry of the latter is beyond all example. When I think on the number of highly finished objects which he has in these pictures of his, and compare them with what I myself have done in the same time, my labour seems idleness. I must exert myself more.—25th, Made a sketch from houses at Brompton, and then began to paint on the pot-girl in my Alehouse Door; painted the shoulder and right arm and hand, and went over the face and neck of the principal female figure, which I have improved in the finishing.—26th, A young lady called, and made use of the name of one of my friends to see my pictures. She expressed in strong terms her regret at not finding any picture of mine in the Exhibition, and said she had seen a print of me, but it looked much too youthful. Though she said nothing at all improper, I am inclined to doubt her character, as well as her motive for calling on me. It is altogether a strange matter. Saw a Teniers, which pleased me much; it is well composed, and has a fine treatment of light and shadow. A letter came from my father, saying that my grandfather was very ill, and that he wished to see me this summer.—28th, Mr. Walter, from Leeds, called, who wished to know if the picture of The Man with the Girl's

Cap was disposed of. Was employed all day in going thinly over the figures in the foreground of The Alehouse Door. Wrote an answer to a most affecting application from Lord Mulgrave to paint a likeness of his departed daughter, which I most willingly agreed to undertake. —30th, Painted till 4, and did in the drunken man in the corner of The Alehouse Door, and went over part of the wall behind the second table.

"*June* 4th, Went with Raeburn to the Crown and Anchor to meet the gentlemen of the Royal Academy. I introduced him to Flaxman; after dinner he was asked by Beechey to sit near the President, where his health was proposed by Flaxman; great attention was paid to him. — 11th, Was employed most of the day in arranging the figure in the green coat in the principal group of The Alehouse Door."

With this entry, made on June 11. 1810, closes the painter's history, and an interesting one it is, of the rise and progress of the fourth of a great series of national pictures, which, from a rustic group carousing at a change-house door, gradually grew and expanded into a work taking a wide range of manners and character, and to a joyous image of social England, adding some of those moral touches which admonish rather than rebuke. The artist, in his plain and unvarnished way, relates, as we have seen, every advice which he followed or rejected in the course of its creation; tells, with scrupulous exactness, when he wrought from life, or where he made memory serve the turn; he seeks to conceal nothing, but notes down failures as readily as he

records successes; is neither discouraged with the one, nor elated with the other, but, adopting every hint that promises improvement, and blotting out as tranquilly as he repaints and restores, he proceeds calmly onward till he brings his odd materials into perfect harmony of action and character, and impresses his own original spirit on the whole composition.

The Alehouse Door—or, as it has since been called, The Village Festival—exhibits England in her most joyous mood: tippling brown ale of her own brewing, and making merry under the shadow of broad-leaved elms of her own planting. Her sons, under the influence of the spigot and faucet, bid the holiday hours fly past, till quiet glee bursts into noisy humour; and her daughters, touched with mirth, and perhaps with liquor, take part in the scene, only to watch till their mates begin to fall from sociality into sottishness, that they may move them home by gentle force and good-humoured persuasion. There are none of the moody groups here which give gloom to the pictures of the Dutch painters. Wilkie has no men who argue with knives and dirks; nor women who scold and scratch faces. The place where this festivity occurs has a country look, remote from spruce towns and regular cities; the inn with balconies and doorways seems once to have sheltered a race a step or two higher into gentility than its present occupants; fruit trees are here and there on the walls, and the elms have been allowed to grow unlopped to the girth and stature of trees. It seems a summer day, when men and women, before harvest begins, have leisure for fun; in the cool side of the inn

seats of all kinds, but especially settles and benches, are placed, as if at random, rather than regularly, and there, gathered into knots and groups, are all the drinking and noisy spirits of the district, waited on by three ministers of joy, a jolly landlord, a bustling landlady, and an attractive handmaid. The ale circulates in black bottles, in shining pewter, or in burnished flagons, till some sit because they cannot stand, and others lie because they cannot sit.

On one side of the picture, right against the ale-house door, from the step of which the landlady casts her eye over the whole scene of her profit, are seated four very drouthy customers, to whom the landlord stands decanting a bottle of his best, inducing the ale, by his art in pouring, to foam over the crystal into which it is descending; it flows almost audibly, speaking more of the malt than of the Thames. A negro is listening to the sound with a face which all but reddens through its tan with enjoyment. The second or central group is composed of a man who

"Is na fou, but just has plenty,"

and who has been most reluctantly persuaded by his wife and daughter to leave the first group while he has feet to carry him: the descent of the strong ale from the landlord's bottle sparkles in his eye; the remonstrances of his friends, who are adding force to entreaty, sound like music in his ear, yet still his feet move homeward: such is the happy influence of wife and weans. His very dog is a lover of propriety, and joins against those who seek to detain

him; while even his tippling associates seem, from their awkward and mirthsome manner of pulling at him, to be scarcely in earnest, and to think that his quiet and modest house dame is in the right. Partly behind this central group are three or four rustics, who acknowledge the double charm of the housemaid and her ale, and detain her, not reluctantly on her part, to listen to such palaver as rises uppermost-like from beer when drink prevails. The landlady sees all this as if she saw it not; and says, or seems to say, like a Nance Tinnoch of the north on a similar occasion, "Sic things maun be, if we sell yill." The group at the other end of the picture is of darker and more painful meaning: a rustic, too tipsy either to walk or stand, has fallen down between the hog's trough and the sink, while his children, evidently motherless, gather around, and regard him with great sorrow. There are auxiliary groups at door, and window, and balcony, laughing over the humour or the beauty of a scene which words are not light enough to describe in its glow of colour; or the skill of the graver equal to the task of transferring, with true effect, its full character to copper.

Wilkie's reputation did not recede, notwithstanding the fears of the Academy and the appearance of the pictures of Bird; neither did his friends forsake him, for they felt it was no "idol senseless, dull, and blind," which they had set up for admiration, but a spirit which, like that of nature, was not to be exhausted by one effort. Lord Mulgrave, as has been related, remonstrated with him for undervaluing his sketches, and sent him double the price which he so modestly

charged; and Sir George Beaumont, with a delicacy of which only fine minds are capable, a day or two after the opening of the Academy, and the presence of the painter's genius was missed, wrote to him, saying,—"My dear Wilkie, I have long felt deeply in your debt, but your delicacy has always stood in the way of its discharge. I thought of deferring it to another opportunity; but it may be so long before that occurs, that I am, for various reasons, induced to send you the enclosed—let this be a secret between us." The high and still rising fame of the painter had indeed increased so much the value of The Blind Fiddler, that he might safely intimate, which he did, that he regarded himself as still in his debt; yet there can be no doubt that Sir George, in this delicate way, desired to sustain the sensitive mind of Wilkie, which he was afraid might require such support; neither, perhaps, was it out of his thoughts that the sale of his pictures, by which he lived, might be injured. That Sir George Beaumont addressed a spirit akin to his own, may be gathered from the following reply.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART.

Dear Sir George, [No date.]

The letter which I had the honour to receive from you this morning, enclosing a cheque for fifty pounds, took me so much by surprise that some time was necessary for reflection. But the more I weigh the matter in my mind, the more inexcusable should I think myself were I to harbour a thought of receiving any further consideration for what I have already been so much overpaid. In order to show

that I am not actuated by mere feelings of diffidence, I beg leave to state, that for the permission you have so kindly given me to have The Blind Fiddler engraved, which, by the by, I had no right to expect, and could not ask for from every person that has got my pictures, I am to receive fifty guineas. This, in addition to what I considered on a former occasion to be a fair and liberal price, would make it an absolute act of injustice in me not to refuse what you have sent me. I therefore, with the highest sense of your generosity, beg of you to receive the cheque again, and take the liberty of enclosing it.

D. W.

It had been the lot of Sir George Beaumont to experience his full share of that caprice which belongs, it is supposed, to those who study the high historic in art. No longer ago than May last in this very year he had vowed to drop all acquaintance with such impracticable professors, but glad to perceive, in this not unlooked-for delicacy in Wilkie, a trait of character which he esteemed in at least one artist, whom he loved, he selected and sent him three dozen of port wine, for which his table was justly famous. "It is not in the power of man," so ran the hasty note which accompanied it, "to colour well, or, indeed, to paint with effect, if his port wine is not good; I have therefore taken the liberty of sending you a few bottles of such as you cannot get at the retailers. A pleasant summer to you, and all the success you can wish. You seem to me to be in the right train: keep the sky and the back-ground tender and comparatively flat, and I

think you will have less difficulty in giving force and relief to your figures. Ever yours, with sincere regard."

This was a well-timed gift: Wilkie, as we have seen, for the sake of the health which arises from easy and gentle walks, had gone to lodge at Knightsbridge, that he might partake in the benefit of morning and evening walks between and Portland Street; but agitated, it is supposed, by a contest for reputation with an English artist to whom his countrymen for the time seemed to incline, and alarmed to see that even the Royal Academy intimated, by advising the withdrawal of a picture from the walls of the Exhibition on which he had done his ablest, that they considered Bird as a dangerous rival, he fell ill; and no wonder, for his health, at no time robust, had been shaken by incessant study; and in all contests of the mind, the most sensitive is sure to suffer. Sir George's wine was therefore welcome to one who took it as a cordial, and for a time it did its good office; but failing at length to restore either his looks or his spirits, he sent for Dr. Baillie, with whom he was intimate, and told him he could neither think nor paint for a quarter of an hour at a time without experiencing a giddiness of head which almost amounted to fainting. Accounts of his illness crept into the public papers and alarmed his friends: Sir George Beaumont was the first who wrote.

"I wish I could persuade you," he says, "to lose no time in taking a little Coleorton air. Be careful of your health, I most earnestly entreat of you; a little relaxation will make you return to your picture with

renewed vigour. I have seen some characters here lately, well worth your attention. Although you know the pleasure it would give us to see you, yet for my own indulgence alone I never would persuade you to neglect your profession, but I wish you to consider that health is as essential a requisite to the successful exertions of an artist as genius."—"I should think," he says again, "if you were to spend the winter in Madeira, it might be the means of restoring you to a permanent state of health. You have the means of being carried there commodiously, by applying to Lord Mulgrave; and I am sure Mr. Phipps, who by his long residence there knows all the conveniences and inconveniences of the place, will not only give you every information that you may require, but furnish you with letters of recommendation such as may be very serviceable. I know your delicacy, and should be very sorry to hurt your feelings; but, if you are prevented by any deficiency of purse from taking the proper measures for restoring your health, and will not inform me of it, I shall, should it come to my knowledge, consider it as most unkind. I hope you think my friendship merits such confidence."

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

My dear Sir, 84. Portland Street, 2d Aug. 1810.

The accounts you have had of my indifferent state of health are but too true; I have been confined for these six weeks by a fever, which I am happy to say has now left me, though in a very weak state. As it was accompanied with a slight affection of the chest,

I was induced by Lord Mulgrave to send for Dr. Baillie, who has attended me ever since, although, I believe, more from his own kindness than from any apprehension of danger.

He now considers me in a fair way of recovery, and as soon as I am able I shall try the change of air. But a journey to Coleorton, as you have so kindly proposed, would be by far too great an effort. Lord Mulgrave has offered to take me to his house at Tunbridge; but, even for this, I shall not be able for a considerable time. The picture is much in the same state as when you saw it last, and it is not likely that I shall be able to recommence my labours soon.

D. W.

His venerable father and most anxious mother wished him to come to Cults; and we have seen that Sir George Beaumont, with equal anxiety, requested him to turn his face to the romantic Coleorton; but Dr. Baillie, who knew best what Wilkie could endure, and who, moreover, felt that gentle employment of head and hand were as necessary for health as fresh air or medicine, advised him to take lodgings near London. This was no sooner made known to Joanna Baillie and her sister, than—for what will genius and generosity not do?—they declared that a journey for a couple of months, when the sickles were shining among the corn, would do them good too; and, commissioning their eminent brother to offer the use of their handsome cottage at Hampstead, with an attendance of servants, to their suffering friend, took their departure accordingly. Wilkie, with a deep sense of

the delicacy of this very distinguished family, set up his staff at Hampstead. The first letter I shall introduce is from their residence:—

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

My dear Sir, Hampstead, 10th August, 1810.

You oblige me beyond any thing that my expressions of thanks can give you an idea of, by your kind letter, which has just now come to hand. I intend leaving Hampstead on Saturday first, and, after I have settled some business that will require me to stop a few days in London, I shall, if agreeable to yourself, be ready to take my departure for Dunmow on Saturday the 3d or Monday the 5th of next month. Your proposal of coming yourself to London for me, I shall most assuredly consider as a great kindness as well as a very high honour; but, unless you have other business in town, I cannot think of your taking so much trouble on my account, and I can assure you my recovery is so far advanced as to enable me to undertake a journey of that distance, in the common way, without the slightest hazard of retarding it. This, however, I must leave in a great measure to yourself.

I wrote some days ago to Dr. Baillie, requesting him to advise me how I should provide myself against the sharp air of the winter; and to a number of questions, amongst which your proposal of going to Madeira was the subject of greatest anxiety, he has been pleased to return me for answer, that he does not think the nature of my complaint requires me to go

to a warm foreign climate, or even very far from London. He recommends me, however, to live out of London, and to take a lodging for the winter in the neighbourhood of Brompton, where I may exercise myself *moderately* at the painting, and, amongst a number of other injunctions (which I shall most strictly adhere to), he has no objection to my taking the air of Dunmow in the mean time as a further restorative.

My most worthy hostesses return to this place in the course of a week, when your compliments shall be most faithfully presented to them. From Miss Joanna I had a letter this morning, in which she congratulates me on the agreeable hours I shall spend in your family. I have been studying her writings lately with very great attention, and cannot help considering them as very wonderful productions. It even adds to my admiration to see such uncommon talents and unassuming manners existing in the same person.

D. W.

He was not much cheered by a letter from home: his mother had seen, in his seeking a bed at Knightsbridge, that his health was tender; and his father had felt, for some time, that he wrote despondingly. "We were much concerned," says the latter, "about your last relapse. From Dr. Baillie's treatment of your trouble, he no doubt thought it dangerous: it is our comfort that you are under such fine skill, and it may be proper that you seek fresh free air in the country. Helen informed you, on her return from the north, that I had been much distressed with a

severe cough, which has left me a little at night, but troubles me much by day. I have not been able to preach since the 22d of July. Your grandfather, too, has been more distressed than usual with a cough, pain in the breast, and great shortness of breath. We hope to hear that your fever is abated."

The stipend of Cults had been lately advanced from 118*l.* to 150*l.* a year; and as the lads of the manse had grown up, the minister and his wife and young daughter began to feel the advantages of even that gentle increase; but ill health embittered all. The following is from his father:—

TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ.

David, Cults, 20th Sept. 1810.

As it is above three weeks since we heard from you, your mother is exceeding anxious to know how you are. By your letter to Helen, of August 22d, you had been at Hampstead for four days; was of consequence able to go out of town, and was gaining strength. John Campbell* called here, and informed us that he had received a card from you before he left town, dated I think from Hampstead, stating that you were recovering. In my last letter I doubted much of your being able to come down to Fife before the season was too far advanced for safe travelling, but, upon consulting your mother on the matter, we are both of opinion that if you are able

* Now Lord Campbell.

to travel so far, it would be better for your health than to stay in London during the short cold days of winter, when your expense must be great, and you can do but little for your own support. I am persuaded that your native air and climate would be of great service for the recovery of your health; and so let every employment rest for a time. We are concerned for the expense of your present situation, and are sensible that you can do but little in London for your own support: yet in all these matters we are not judges, and must leave it to yourself to determine what ought to be done.

I am yours sincerely,

DAVID WILKIE.

As this is one of the last letters which the father of the great painter wrote, I have preserved exact its "form and pressure," to show the patriarchal style of correspondence — a touch of simple manners — between a kind father and a much beloved son. The following letter to his younger brother Thomas, who was then abroad, speaks more fully of his condition: —

TO THOMAS WILKIE, ESQ.

Hampstead, 12th Sept. 1810.

I have now the happiness to inform you that I am a great deal better since you went away. I was enabled, the week after, to go to Mrs. Stodart of Brompton, where I was very kindly treated, and soon found the advantage of being out of the London air.

Mr. Barclay, however, told me, that as all the inflammatory complaints, he thought, were gone, I would certainly improve much faster in a sharper air; as it would be more bracing, and recommended me strongly to go to Hampstead. This advice I was the more induced to comply with, as I had but a few days before received a most kind invitation from the Miss Baillies to take possession of their house, while they themselves were gone in the country for two months: but as they were not yet to leave Hampstead for some time, Mr. Barclay urged me strongly to take a lodging. This was accordingly done, and a few days after Mrs. Coppard came for me to Brompton, and the day following accompanied me, with one of her daughters, to Hampstead. They proposed to stay all night, to see me properly attended to; and, from what followed, it was very lucky for me they had come to this resolution, for, on entering the lodging, we found it had been newly painted, and smelt so strongly of the oil and white lead, that I could not stay in it for a moment, and I was forced, as it was late in the evening, to take up my abode for that night in a little room over a baker's shop, and was obliged to content myself next morning with such a lodging as Mrs. Coppard could find in the extremity to which we were reduced. However, as the Miss Baillies were to let me have their house in the course of a week, I was the more easily satisfied, and whatever inconvenience I have been put to, has been fully recompensed by the very comfortable situation in which I am now placed. You will recollect where the house is, as I called at it when you were with me

at Hampstead last year. It is in a very pleasant part of the town, and has every comfort within itself that can make it agreeable. The Miss Baillies have left their servants to attend me, a number of books to read, and they have not even forgot to leave me some jelly, some marmalade, and Scotch cheese; with all these I have such open fields to walk in, and fresh air to breathe, that I have improved in health most wonderfully since I came here; and I have not only the prospect of getting rid of all complaint, but of establishing a stock of strength for the time to come.

D. W.

TO DR. BAILLIE.

Dear Sir, [October, 1810.]

I should not have taken the liberty of troubling you in your present retirement, had I not been strongly urged by some friends to request you to advise me, now that my health is in a great measure restored, what steps I should take to secure myself from the severities of the approaching winter.

Should you, from the nature of my complaint, consider a foreign climate necessary, I believe I could, without much difficulty, go to the island of Madeira for some months, although the obstacle of sea-sickness, to which I am uncommonly liable in a long voyage, may perhaps be looked upon as an objection. If, on the other hand, you think I might venture to stay in England, I should wish to know whether a town or country residence would be most proper, and how soon you think might return to my professional

labours. The improvement I have made since I first came to Hampstead has been very great indeed; my appetite is good, and all the disorders arising from the stomach have, without the assistance or the correction of medicines, entirely left me. I am still, however, comparatively weak and thin, and cannot walk above six miles on a stretch without getting fatigued; but I have had no return of any thing like a cough, and all that remains of the pulmonary affection is a slight sensation of pressure or confinement on my chest.

I feel as yet no inconvenience from the coldness or sharpness of this air, so far as the season has advanced, and shall probably go still farther into the country for the greater part of next month; but in this, as well as in every other plan for the recovery of my health, I shall be entirely regulated by such advice as you shall think proper to communicate.

D. W.

To this Dr. Baillie replied, that he saw no immediate necessity for exchanging the air of England for that of Madeira: by residing in the mild air of the vicinity of London, and studying with moderation, he would regain the health which had been so sorely shaken. To the accomplished sister of his head physician he next addressed himself.

TO MISS JOANNA BAILLIE.

Dear Madam,

All the good that I could have expected, or that yourself and Miss Baillie could possibly have wished me, has been produced by my residence in your house at Hampstead. I have already almost acquired the complete re-establishment of my health, and as you have both contributed so much to this, I can assure you that my gratitude for your kindness is not inferior to the importance of the object you have enabled me to attain. I have had every accommodation here that could in the slightest degree add to my comfort or happiness. The servants have shown me every attention in their power, and I have been amply amused in my solitary hours by the interesting collection of books you have left me. The weather has been so uncommonly fine as to enable me to breathe the fresh air almost every hour of the day in the open fields; and the long confinement I had previously undergone, seems to have given a double relish to the many beauties and endless variety of this delightful spot. The time, however, is now come when I must consider how I am to secure myself against the severities of the approaching winter; and as many of my friends have been recommending me to go abroad, I have taken the liberty of enclosing a note for Dr. Baillie, requesting him to favour me again with his advice. If he should think such a step necessary, I shall probably spend all the next month with Sir George Beaumont, at Dunmow, in Essex, and shall at all events leave Hampstead by

the 28th of this month, if that time will not be unsuitable to the arrangements you have made for returning.

D. W.

Having now recovered much of the health which he had lost, Wilkie turned his thoughts to Dunmow in Essex, the residence for the time of his friend, Sir George Beaumont. "The air of Dunmow," says the benevolent baronet, "is remarkable for its salubrity; and as it is much enclosed—very mild for this part of the island. You will not be exposed to the piercing blasts which meet you at every corner in London, and as it is not so high as Hampstead, I really think you will find it much warmer. Adieu! take care of yourself, and comply with my request, which no selfish consideration would induce me to make, were I not well assured it would be of advantage to your health." A few days afterwards Sir George urges the artist to escape from London to Dunmow. "I suppose by this time your excellent and distinguished hostesses" (Joanna Baillie and her sister) "are returned, or about to return, to Hampstead; and if that be the case, I hope you will not remain long in London, which, I am sure, is bad for you. I hope, however, by relaxation from thought and study, by good hours and good air, to make you a match for the smoky vapour and unwholesome blasts of the metropolis." In another letter he says, "Lady Beaumont's carriage shall meet you at Harlowe, if you promise to come in a post-chaise. If you come by any stage-coach you will be obliged to set out too early in the

morning, or be too late at night; and this, with the addition of a sick child's head out at each window, or a whimsical lady who will insist upon having both windows down and starve you, or bolt up and suffocate you, will be sure at this season to give you a cold. There are some picturesque cottages in this neighbourhood of which we may make studies ; or if you wish to exercise yourself moderately at the easel, you shall have all 'appliances and means to boot;' but as I suspect you will want a *moderator*, I will, with permission, serve you in that capacity. I am glad you have been studying Joanna Baillie's works; she is indeed a most extraordinary genius. I little expected to see such plays as hers written in the present age, when presumptuous innovation is the order of the day, and has reduced poetry, painting, and politics to their primeval rudiments."

These anxious and generous invitations the artist accepted by letter, adding, "I shall not bring any colours with me, as it is my wish to run wild as much as possible, and I am not without hope that when I return, I shall be able to finish my large picture (The Village Festival) before the Exhibition, without exceeding that moderation which has been recommended." From Dunmow, made doubly agreeable by the presence of the venerable mother of his host, Wilkie wrote to his younger brother, he experienced much kindness from less distinguished people than baronets and poetesses.

TO THOMAS WILKIE, ESQ.

[Dunmow, *n. d.*]

I continued at Hampstead till the end of October, and as I had a very kind invitation to spend some time at Sir George Beaumont's in Essex, I returned to town to make preparations for that visit, and after spending some days at Mrs. Coppard's, and at Mr. Stodart's, of Brompton, I left London on the 6th of November, and came to this place, forty-two miles from town, where I have been ever since most comfortably and pleasantly situated. With the exception of a severe bilious attack, which confined me for a day or two, but which seemed to have no connexion with my former complaint, and left me as soon as my stomach was put to rights, I may say that I am getting on as well as can be expected with the great work of my recovery.

Before leaving Hampstead, I was advised by several people to write to Dr. Baillie to ask if he thought it necessary for me to go to a foreign clime to avoid the severities of the winter, or if he thought any other course would be proper the more effectually to ensure my complete recovery. In answer to which questions he said, that, as my lungs never appeared to him to be substantially affected, he hoped it would not be necessary for me to go abroad, or even very far from London; but he thought it advisable that I should be out of town, and recommended me to take lodgings at Brompton, or in the King's Road, Chelsea; which advice, with several injunctions that his letter contained besides, I intend most rigidly to follow. The

only difficulty that occurred was the necessity of leaving Mrs. Coppard; but as my exhausted means of support prevented all possibility of returning to my lodging in Portland Street, while I kept up another establishment out of town, I was obliged to apprize her of my intention to quit after the customary time of notice was expired. And here that lady was so disinterested as to allow me to give up the lodging immediately, and to say that I might be welcome to remain with her as her visiter till I was provided with other apartments; but as I was anxious to retain the lodging till my return from Sir George Beaumont's, I agreed to continue to pay her rent till the 28th of November, making altogether two years since my first entrance.

All this being settled to both our satisfactions, I began to look out for another lodging, and by Mr. Barclay's advice I have secured one in the King's Road, Chelsea, at two guineas and a half per week, including attendance; where I hope to be in good air, and comfortable. It consists of two sitting-rooms, a bedroom for myself, and a spare one for you, as often as you can get out from the place I suppose you on your return must occupy in the city. I have taken the apartments, however, only for six months, beginning on the 14th of this month; and as Mrs. Coppard is talking of leaving her house in Portland Street, and intends, for the benefit of the health of her own family, to take a house out of town, and, if she can find one to her mind, to move to it next term, I purpose returning to her as a lodger, that I may have it in my power to make her all the return I can for

her unexampled kindness. If she gets a house in a healthy situation, and of respectable appearance, within three or four miles of London, I think it will do. My great object is to be out of town; my health, I think, materially depends upon it; and it is lucky my occupation does not make it at all inconvenient.

I had occasion about a month ago to draw upon your account at Messrs. Anderson, Campbell & Co. for 20*l.*, for which I have given them a receipt. The Boydells paid me the bill of 52*l.* 10*s.*, which has carried me on a great way. I have finished a little picture since coming to Sir George Beaumont's; for which I think I may get a small sum that will be of service; and the sketch of The Alehouse Door, which is still unsold, with the small sum I have in the 3 per Cents., will carry me on, I hope, a good way before I require to borrow from any body. Several of my friends have offered to lend me money when I shall need. I should wish, however, to avoid this as long as possible.

D. W.

The artist remained at Dunmow till the first week of December; but though he took no colours with him, and resolved to run wild, his natural desire to be "doing something" soon overcame him, and seizing the palette and pencils of Sir George Beaumont, he painted The Gamekeeper of Dunmow in such a style of vigour and ease as has rendered it one of his best portrait productions. How the friends parted is best told in Wilkie's own words.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir George, Portland Street, 17th Dec. 1810.

The draft of 100*l.* you gave me at parting on Sunday evening so far exceeds any value the pictures may have for which you intend it as a compensation, that in justice to your goodness I cannot help attributing it, in a great degree, to your commiseration for the weak and unfortunate condition to which my illness has reduced me; but in whatever light you may wish it to be considered, you have, by this, and by your kindness to me at Dunmow, overpowered me more with the sense of obligation than the warmest thanks can express, or than any effort of gratitude can ever be able to repay.

I got to town yesterday by half past 2, and was not at all fatigued. I have not yet taken possession of my new lodging, and shall probably not leave this till the end of the week. My address will then be No. 4. Manor Terrace, King's Road, Chelsea. I hope you will get on to your satisfaction with the subject you were about to begin of Conway Castle. I am sure the sentiment which the present disposition of light and shadow gives to it will be very greatly admired in London.

D. W.

It is pleasant to record the interchange, not of courtesy alone, but of heart and mind, between men of genius and men of rank: the reply of the "descendant of heroes and kings" merits preservation for the

rarity, in this land at least, of an epistle so mild and unaffected from the high to the humble:—

"I had no other motive, dear Wilkie, for what I have done but a real regard and esteem for you, admiration of your talent, and—for the selfish motive will appear—an ardent desire to possess so excellent a picture, not pictures. I will not, therefore, suffer you to talk of obligation. If that is to be felt in proportion to pleasure received (which in reason it ought to be), I am confident I am your debtor. But if you still feel the contrary, be assured you cannot so effectually return the favour as by taking care of yourself. In the first place, listen to no suggestions, either of your own or started by others, that you can get the large picture (The Village Festival) finished for the Exhibition. Do not deceive yourself by means of your physicians (who have no idea of the toil of painting) into a notion that you may paint so many hours every day: let your own feelings be your guide: and, lastly, if in spite of all your precautions, you find the picture *fastening* upon you, or the air of the place not agreeing with you, or that you are not so well from your want of riding, I think I need not tell you how happy you will make Lady Beaumont and myself, and none more than my mother, by revisiting this place. You know its advantages and disadvantages from experience; and there are few things would give us more pleasure than a letter from you desiring the horses to meet you at Harlowe on such a day. Adieu, my worthy friend; amuse yourself, and endeavour to keep up your spirits; remember that is a main point

in a nervous case, as I am confident yours is; and if you take care not to fatigue yourself, and resolutely resolve to resist anxiety of all sort, I have no doubt of your recovering your strength, and being perhaps better than you ever were in your life. But you must have patience, and impress strongly upon your mind, that you are not losing, but saving, time by relaxation."

It appears from Wilkie's memoranda, as well as from his correspondence, that he still continued to be a sufferer. By the advice of Dr. Baillie, he had removed from Portland Street to Manor Terrace, King's Road, Chelsea, where the air was gentler, and where he might indulge himself in long walks. His health began to mend a little; his love of observation returned; nor could all the remonstrances of his friends restrain him from the easel. He retouched old pictures, and he imagined new: among the former was the picture of Sir George Beaumont's Gamekeeper, and among the latter was a picture representing Chelsea Pensioners indulging themselves at Pension Time; the halt, and the lame, and the blind were there—all old and all joyous:—save the Jolly Beggars of Burns, no such group ever before dawned upon the eye of genius; a group ill exchanged for even the admirable picture of The Waterloo Gazette, into which it finally resolved itself.

Wilkie obeyed the injunctions of his friends and his own fears, and abstained for a time from large compositions; but his sense of his own dependence and love of his art would not allow him to be wholly

idle. For Lord Mulgrave he painted sketches of The Card Players, The Jew's Harp, The Cut Finger, The Rent Day, The Village Politicians, and The Blind Fiddler: some of these approached in merit the original pictures; they had all their careful freedom of touch and vigour of character and colour, and their inimitable stamp of original thought. To The Village Festival, as his health improved, he next turned his attention; but it was with the resolution, if finished to his liking, to add it to his other pictures, and form an exhibition of his own, where no envious mind could distract his arrangement by flinging its flaring colours amid his soberer hues; and where no timidity of judgment could make him retire before an inferior rival. He kept this resolution, however, to himself for a time.

The affection of Sir George Beaumont followed Wilkie to London. "I am so anxious," he says, Jan. 15th, 1811, "to hear some report of your health which can be relied on, that I must write: I desire only one line in return to tell me how you go on: I hope you abstain from painting, if you find it fatigues you. Depend upon it, you will lose no time in the end: trust to your own feelings respecting this. I repeat, your physicians cannot judge in this case; they naturally consider it in the light of relaxation and pleasure; but they cannot judge of the labour of the relaxation or the anxiety of the pleasure. I hope you will not think me impatient if I wish to see my picture (The Gamekeeper). When can you spare it? Is a frame made? Poor Sir Francis Bourgeois! what mortality in the Academy!"

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir George, 4. Manor Terrace, 26th Jan. 1811.

Charpentier has got the frame ready, and will send it to-day carefully packed up with the picture. I have touched on various parts, and gone over entirely the right sleeve of the coat. There are still, however, a number of amendments I should wish to make before it can be considered as a finished picture, but which the present clammy and soft state of its surface prevents me from doing with effect.

I should like to know what pictures you are at present engaged about; and whether you have succeeded to your own liking in any of those you were proposing to begin. From the consultations we had about the sketches, I feel interested in knowing which you are going on with, and desirous that you should have several of them ready for the Exhibition. The late falling off among our members will make your assistance very acceptable. I hope you still keep in mind the request of Miss Joanna Baillie, who, I am sure, will be exceedingly gratified by any picture that you will think proper to fix upon.

I shall look for you in town, now, in little more than a month, and shall expect to have a call from you at my lodging in the King's Road, which, from its airy situation, I dare say you will like very much. I live still very retired, but am at no loss at all for amusement. My health is better now than I think it has been in the whole course of my recovery. I feel stouter, and am able to paint longer without getting

fatigued; but as I accustomed myself formerly to take too much exercise, I have altered my plan lately, and have found my account in being a little more moderate.

D. W.

I hope you will like the frame. The directions I gave Charpentier were to make a flat French frame, about four inches broad.

"The picture," replies Sir George, "arrived safe last night. It is very flattering to me that you should feel anxious about the progress of my pictures. I began the Conway Castle which you recommended; but the beauties the sketch suggested to your poetical eye were of so volatile a nature, they escaped me in attempting to make them out; and I have been obliged to lay it aside for the present. I have now been painting on that which was founded upon a sketch made at Lord Lonsdale's, and I think it proceeds rather better; but I have been much interrupted by other business, and you well know how difficult it is to recall the mind from business to art. Pray tell Miss Joanna Baillie that I have neither forgotten my promise nor lost my inclination to fulfil it, but I have not yet been able to paint such a landscape as I wish her to possess. I have, however, one in hand for her, of which I have some hopes.

"Charpentier has made a pretty frame; but I think he loads his work too much with little ornaments. I like a frame with rich corners, and then more plain in the middle. Ross, although he did not finish them well, had an excellent pattern with shields at the

corners; I have never seen frames set off pictures better. Charpentier's frame covers some of the picture, and has put out some of the *fire*. I would not have a hair's breadth of it lost."

Wilkie once said to me, that Sir George Beaumont had a nicety of judgment and a delicacy of feeling in painting, surpassing all he had ever met with in those who reckoned themselves critics. That he desired excellence in the works of one he loved, his letters contain abundance of proof. "I have repeatedly," he thus writes on the 10th of February, "considered your picture (The Gamekeeper) with all the care of which I am capable; and the result is a confirmation of my former opinion of its excellence — a very little more would, I think, render it perfect. It is with diffidence I give my remarks to you; and if they do not strike you in the same light, burn this letter, and think of them no more. It appears, then, to me that at the distance required to look at the picture as a whole, there is too great a proportion of tint, nearly resembling the coat which gives rather a blue-black tendency to the general hue; this, I conceive, might be entirely removed merely by a warm-reflected light from the fire, smartly touching on the crown of the hat, and extending to the brim; this would warm the lower part of the picture, and remove, at the same time, a certain monotony which I think prevails over the group of objects placed there, and makes a little confusion amongst them when seen at a particular distance. I think, also, the reflected light upon the wall behind the head is rather too cold, but I know

the difficulty of that, and am in hopes that the varnish will remove that sufficiently. My last remark is, that the bag and nightcap somehow or other do not *tell;* perhaps some other colour might remedy this, but I own I know not what to recommend; however, this is of small consequence, for though it does not improve the general effect so much as I expected, I do not think it does any harm. If you think the remarks well founded, and wish to reconsider the picture, the sooner I send it to you the better, that if you do any thing it may have time to harden before the Exhibition."

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir George, 4. Manor Terrace, Chelsea.

The picture came safe to Portland Street on Saturday; and as soon as it can be conveyed out to this place, I shall set to work upon it. At present I have given directions to Charpentier to go and look at it before it is taken out of the frame, and to alter it so as to show the whole face of the picture. What you have proposed in your letter about showing the nightcap only, and without the bag, will be an improvement; and as I happen to have a nightcap here of the same sort as that you got me at Dunmow, I shall be able to do it without difficulty. We shall be all glad to see you in London on the 20th. I mentioned to Miss Baillie, whom I saw with her sister the other day, that I supposed you would bring a picture to town for her, which she seemed very much pleased to hear.

D. W.

The death of Sir Francis Bourgeois made a vacancy in the Royal Academy, which required to be filled up. Wilkie, now in his twenty-sixth year, was too young, in the opinion of those electors who weigh eminence by weight of years, and who, grey-headed themselves when elected, are unwilling to raise any save the grey-headed to the like rank: there were others who, disliking all eminence, looked coldly on his claims; nor were there wanting some who, with extreme narrowness of soul, disliked him for the land he came from. But his fame was of an order that could not be lightly overlooked; his manners, too, were of that unpresuming stamp which seldom make active enemies; and the Academy had some reparation to make for having persuaded him to withdraw a picture of fine genius from their walls, in dread of the rivalry of Bird. They had heard too, it is said, that he had forgiven rather than forgotten this unwholesome advice; that he inclined his ear not a little to the counsels of one who had resentments of his own against the Academy; and that, dreading to lose him, they resolved to secure him while they had the power. Be that as it may, it was with something like surprise that he received the following letter from his friend, the secretary, dated February 12th, 1811:—

Sir,

I have the pleasure to acquaint you that you were yesterday, in a general assembly, duly elected a Royal Academician. By referring to your abstract

of the laws, pages 4. and 5., you will perceive what is further required, previously to the confirmation of your election, and the delivery of your diploma.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

HENRY HOWARD, Secretary.

Wilkie, who had looked up to the Royal Academy with something of the reverence of a son, obeyed all its rules, listened to all its maxims, treasured up its counsels in his heart, practised them in his life, believed that its members rivalled the prime ones of the earth, and that the chair of the president outshone the thrones of Ormez or of Ind, received this intimation with a sober joy peculiar to himself. Not so the lovers of art: they rejoiced aloud to see this admission of fresh life's-blood into the Academy, and that so great a favourite, and one so worthy, had been elected while he was yet vigorous and young. The public had ceased to look with wonder on the dark riddles of Barry; the historical pictures of the president West found patrons within the palace gate, and little cordial applause in country or in town; the fiery extravagance of Fuseli was cooled on the Academy walls by the frozen rigidity of Northcote; while Hilton, like a star in its dawn, had but begun to lighten on the earth. The classic beauty of Howard, and the modest graces of Stothard, had already called up some of that admiration without which their names are never named: Callcott and Turner excelled then, as now, in native and poetic landscape; while, in portraiture, the graceful Lawrence and the

poetic Phillips, though they found rivals in Owen, and Beechey, and Shee, had the lead and kept it. Behind these came a swarm whose names helped to swell the lists and buckram out the Academic body, without adding much to its beauty or strength. To the Academy Wilkie brought fame, acquired by works reflecting as in a mirror the manners, customs, and feelings of the people of Britain, in the invention of which neither party nor history could claim a share; the domestic character of the land was again in the hands of a consummate dramatist — the only one who had appeared since the days of Hogarth.

The health of Wilkie had begun to revive before his election: he had resumed his studies on Angerstein's picture of The Village Festival, and finished various sketches, the ready sale for which supplied him with immediate bread. "It gives us great pleasure," says Sir George Beaumont, "to hear so good an account of your health. I scarce need say, continue to be cautious: you, as well as myself, are aware of the value of health now. I wish you joy: the honour is mutual." These concluding words refer to his election into the ranks of the Academy. Sir George knew the world well enough to know that the Academy, by setting the stamp of its approbation on the artist, did for him what the honours of a college perform for those who venture into the paths of literature. He who is not of the Academy, the world scruples to regard as worthy; and he who is found in the fields of literature without a college licence is regarded as a poacher.

When the Royal Academy Exhibition opened in

May it contained two pictures by the academician elect, viz. A Humorous Scene, and Portrait of a Gamekeeper; the former exhibited The Penny Wedding, as it were in the dawn, and the latter was the gamekeeper of Sir George Beaumont, alluded to in the preceding portion of this narrative. He had not finished to his satisfaction The Alehouse Door; and he scrupled to push pictures before the world with which he was not pleased, in the hope of giving pleasure to others. Some of the critics lamented he was not on the walls in his usual strength; and others, aware of the cause, spoke of his illness with a sympathy which did honour to that ungentle class. His constant friend, Sir George Beaumont, wrote to him in June, saying, "I am inclined to recommend a little country air. Jackson has induced me to hope for him at Coleorton in the course of the summer, on his way north; and if you could contrive to accompany him, I need not tell you it would give us great pleasure. You might then not only receive the benefit of the air, which certainly agrees with you, but also retire from severer studies, and sketch landscape for back-grounds, which would enable you to paint your next exterior subject with less anxiety and much less labour." The same generous friend thus writes to him from Coleorton in July: — "As I think the picture cannot be in better or in safer hands, I shall be obliged to you to take The Blind Fiddler to your own house; it will be gratifying to many of your friends and admirers to see it with you, and I really think not disadvantageous to yourself occasionally to refer to the simplicity of your first feelings, for I have observed

that, in the struggle to paint better, and acquire more execution, it is not unusual for artists to lose some portion of that exquisite expression which was the grace and beauty of their earlier productions." The picture of The Blind Fiddler, relieved from the graver of Burnet, remained for a time with the painter: the masterly engraving carried its fine sentiment and fine grouping over all Europe.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir George, 4. Manor Terrace, Chelsea, 15th July, 1811.

Your proposal that I shall still retain the picture of The Blind Fiddler by me for some time is exceedingly kind, considering the length of time I have already had it. As I was anxious that it should be returned as soon as the engraving was done, I took it about a week ago, with the little picture from the Academy, and lodged them both safe in Grosvenor Square. I could not have kept it long, as I am about to leave my present lodging.

There is no doubt considerable advantage to be gained by looking occasionally at one's early productions, but I have some doubts whether there is not as much in seeing the effect that time and varnish have upon the colours, as in any thing that can be derived from the study of the inexperienced notions of art we generally see in a first picture.

The Alehouse Door is very nearly finished. The sky, which I have always been most afraid of, is now done, which leaves me very little else to do. I ex-

pect to be able to leave London by the end of this month.

D. W.

Before the little picture of The Gamekeeper went home, Charpentier repaired the frame, and I put some touches on the sleeves of the man's coat, which had been a little rubbed.

CHAPTER X.

CULTS.—WILKIE EXHIBITS HIS PICTURES IN PALL-MALL.—CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION.—DEATH OF THE REV. DAVID WILKIE.—LETTERS TO MISS WILKIE.—"BLINDMAN'S BUFF."—WILKIE TAKES A HOUSE IN KENSINGTON.—ARRIVAL IN LONDON OF MRS. WILKIE AND MISS WILKIE.—"LETTER OF INTRODUCTION."—EXTRACTS FROM JOURNAL.

THE declining state of his venerable father's health, induced Wilkie, before his own was fully restored, to turn his steps to Scotland. He arrived at the manse of Cults early in August 1811. The condition in which he found its inmate is described in the following letter to his brother Thomas, whom he left behind in London:—

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

Cults, 19th August, 1811.

I arrived at Kinghorn to breakfast, where I found, to my great joy, that a stage coach had been started from thence to Dundee, and that it set off every day at 11 o'clock. I accordingly took a place inside to Pitlessie. . . . . I found my father in a very weak state, and considerably altered since I had seen him. He has been rather worse for some weeks past. What he complains of most is a giddiness in his head, which not only prevents him from walking without support, but also deprives him of the amusement of

reading, even although his sight is not affected by it. His deafness has also increased so much that we have but very little access to his mind in the way of conversation, and I have scarcely been able to get him to hear me speak since I came. He, however, possesses all his mental faculties in their full vigour. He writes and speaks, and manages his affairs with his usual acuteness, and seems very much gratified at seeing me again. John Anderson came out the other day, and applied some leeches to his temples to remove the giddiness, and they have had some effect. He is still able to walk out before the door to enjoy the air, but does not preach any, nor has he done it for some time. The sacrament was administered entirely by the neighbouring ministers.

My mother was exceedingly glad to see me. She has had a great deal of anxiety and fatigue of late, in consequence of my father's illness, but seems to bear it very well, and is apparently in good health. Helen has grown very much, and is greatly improved in her music and singing, in both of which she shows more taste than any person I have seen for some time.

There are considerable alterations in the appearance of this place, principally from their having cut down all the trees round the bottom of the garden and pigeon-house, a sort of improvement I do not much admire. Lady Mary Crawford is carrying on very great works at the lodge. She has reared an immensely large Gothic castle, but having quarrelled with the architect she has employed another, who is completing it after a different plan. One end is a

castle, and the other is a large Gothic chapel; but notwithstanding this absurdity, it has a very magnificent appearance.

D. W.

The following is in the same anxious spirit:—

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

Cults, 11th September, 1811.

My father's state of health still continues very changeable. He is some days wonderfully well; and is occasionally quite overcome, at other times, with sensations that he cannot explain, but which frequently occasion sickness and vomiting. This, and the supposition which we have lately begun to entertain of its arising from a fulness of blood, oblige us to keep him on very low diet; and we think, upon the whole, that it agrees better with him than the plan of giving him strengthening medicines, which was formerly adopted. He is very weak, but is always able to come down to the parlour through the day, and to walk about, with the assistance of an arm, on the green before the door. When I first came, John Anderson applied three leeches to his temples, which did him no harm; we afterwards had Dr. Grace out to see him, who so far approved of John's plan, that he ordered half a dozen more leeches to be applied in a day or two, which was done, and we think, upon the whole, that they have wrought a good. He is still, however, subject to those nervous attacks, and we

will, perhaps, have another consultation before the plan is further persisted in.

D. W.

During the period of his visit to Cults, Wilkie renewed his acquaintance with the scenes and the companions of his youth; and coming with an eye and a mind directed and purified by true art, he was enabled to select objects of the order and character of the works which dwelt in his fancy, and which he had resolved to commit to canvas. He had, he has been heard to say, formerly filled his sack with chaff as well as with corn; but knowledge had enabled him to winnow it, and retain only the sound and the pure. He returned to London on the 27th of October. While he was in the north, his brother Thomas, by his desire, had taken a new abode at Kensington, then, as now, famed for salubrity, and when he arrived he found his easel already set up, and his painting room in order. He instantly began his studies, for he had taxed his now renewed strength to a new toil: he first, however, allayed a fear which had arisen in his mother's mind.

TO MISS WILKIE.

29. Lower Phillimore Place, Kensington,
18th Nov. 1811.

My dear Sister,

The anxiety my mother has laboured under about my health, on seeing that I had not with my own hand directed the newspaper, is entirely ground-

less. I am as well now as I have been for a very long time, and am going on with the painting in my usual moderate way. I am sometimes glad to get any body to direct the newspaper on the Monday forenoon, for the sake of saving time, which is an important consideration in these short days. Every body I meet with compliments me on the improvement of my looks, and I am taking all the means in my power to retain my improved appearance. I dine, as formerly, at 2 o'clock, paint two hours in the forenoon and two hours in the afternoon, and take a short walk in the park or through the fields twice a day. I have been now three weeks in this place, but very few people know of my return, so that I have all my time to myself. The picture of The Rat Catcher is now nearly finished, and I expect to begin the oil sketch of *The Blind Man's Buff* very soon. In the evening I go on with the mathematics, which I take great delight in, and I have also begun a system of algebra, a study I should like to learn something of too.

Although you say you wrote me sooner at my mother's request than you otherwise intended, I was anxious enough before your letter came to know how my father was doing. I am sorry to hear that his deafness has increased; but if he is able to read so much as you say, he must be a good deal better than when I left you. I hope he takes all proper care not to fatigue himself with it. I beg you will write as often as you can, and inform us of our father's health.

I shall be always glad to hear of all that is doing in the neighbourhood, not from any curiosity to know the tittle-tattle of the place, but that I may be able to in-

terfere, in case the interest of my father or mother may be in any degree affected by what is going on.

I am glad to hear you were to have the honour of calling on Lady Mary, and I hope you were well received. I cannot make out who it is that intends to compliment me by naming a son after me; we must contrive to give the little fellow a frock, whoever it be.

Mr. Haydon has been out to see me several times. I showed him the last time he was here the sketch I had made in pencil of you, which he was quite delighted with. He said, he supposed you were more like *me* than any other of the family, though *ten thousand times handsomer*. It has now gone to town to be put in a frame, and I intend to hang it up in my room. Unfortunately, Thomas says he cannot discover the smallest resemblance in it.

Mrs. Coppard* and her family I of course see very frequently; they still continue their former kindness. I sit always by myself, but I find it very pleasant to have them so near me.

D. W.

The task to which Wilkie had taxed his strength, he, as early as the beginning of the year 1808, communicated to his brother Thomas, whom he consulted in all his designs. "I am at present considering," he said, "about entering into some very extensive speculations respecting the exhibition of my pictures, which some of my friends, whose advice I value on such

* Mrs. Coppard had removed from Great Portland Street, Marylebone, to No. 29. Lower Phillimore Place, Kensington; from whence Wilkie writes this letter.

matters, flatter me will be a very profitable concern." He now retouched some of his early pictures, finished those which were in progress, and even conceived others entirely new, that his exhibition might have novelty as well as variety to recommend it. As soon as he had settled his plans and made his arrangements, he hastened to inform his friend, Sir George Beaumont, of this speculation.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

29. Phillimore Place, Kensington,
10th March, 1812.

Dear Sir George,

The intention I once had of making an exhibition of all my own pictures I have again revived; and, after most mature consideration and advice, have resolved upon carrying it into effect this ensuing spring.

As you yourself so strongly recommended me such a step formerly, I do not doubt but you will approve of it now; and, from the regard you have so often shown for the advancement of my interests, I in some degree calculate upon your steady support in an undertaking in which they are so deeply concerned. I shall be glad when you come to town, in order that I may consult you about the various parts of my plan; but as I have already resolved upon it, I cannot delay acquainting you with my intention, and the progress that it has already made.

I have engaged a very handsome room in Pall Mall, nearly opposite the British Gallery, which, from its

size and entrance, is particularly adapted for my purpose, and, from its situation, as highly respectable as any in London. The next step of importance was that of securing the promise of Mr. Angerstein's picture, which I have obtained with that sort of readiness and good-will as leads me to think that Mr. Angerstein himself will take an interest in the success of the concern. All the other pictures that are within my reach I am now about to apply for, and, amongst the number, the two I had the honour to paint for you. These, however, I apply for in the same way as I have applied for Lord Mulgrave's, more out of matter of form than serious solicitation. The others, particularly that belonging to the Duke of Gloucester, I shall have greater difficulty in asking for; and, as I intend to couple with my solicitation for the picture a request that his Royal Highness would be pleased to countenance my Exhibition, I must proceed with the caution that the importance of the object will require. The picture that I sent to Scotland some years ago of *The Country Fair* we have also thought worth while to have among the number, and I have already given directions to have it sent up by sea on purpose. I saw it when I was last in Scotland; and, although it is no doubt very badly painted, it has more subject and more entertainment in it than any three pictures I have since painted.

In the management of every thing, and indeed in the notion of having the exhibition at all, I have been more regulated by the opinion of my friends than by my own judgment. Lord Mulgrave is most heartily interested in carrying it through, and Seguier speaks

with more than usual confidence of its success. It is not yet known to many people, but after all the pictures have been secured, I intend to advertise it publicly.

D. W.

An artist seldom finds so sympathising a counsellor as Sir George Beaumont, who wrote, saying:—"It is with the greatest pleasure I hear of your intention; and although I cannot be sure your success will be so great as if the exhibition had taken place when the public were under the influence of their first surprise —for 'there is a tide in the affairs of men'—yet I have no doubt of its being very productive. I am particularly glad to hear you refer to your earlier pictures with respect, for, believe me, there is in the first feelings of a man of genius a simplicity and truth which, as he advances in practical skill, will, without continual attention, be very apt to be lost in the struggle to excel: simplicity is the vital principle of the line you have chosen. Deep pathos, although I think you are quite equal to it, you do not appear to aim at: satire and broad humour are not perhaps congenial to your feelings; what remains then is the amenity of humble life, dashed with a proper proportion of comic pleasantry. In this line—in The Blind Fiddler, &c.—you have succeeded to the admiration of the world. I only wish to caution you against too great anxiety: there are various ways by which sudden and early fame may be injurious to an artist. From vanity, you are not in the smallest danger; but if your anxiety to excel is not restrained within due

bounds, you will perhaps expect more than it is possible to perform; your progress will be impeded, you will proceed slowly and not surely, and your health will suffer. Another evil may arise from a morbid or unreasonable effort to excel what you have before done. You may be induced to quit your ground, and be in great danger of losing your native simplicity. It appears to me that you can never improve upon the simplicity of your first intentions: the notion of endeavouring to improve upon them by an introduction of more taste or refinement is extremely dangerous: all twisted figures, or even a tendency to the antique, are not, in my opinion, admissible. Beauty, indeed, may be introduced, but it should be perfectly rural and unsophisticated. In short, The Village Politicians, The Blind Fiddler, and The Rent Day, are models of what I mean: I may be mistaken, but at any rate I think I may promise myself you will forgive my zeal for your success. I have been accused by high authority of having injured you by indiscriminate praise: I hope such is not the case, for I am well aware that it is as much the duty of a real friend to find fault as to commend; and as it is certainly less pleasant, perhaps it is the most meritorious exertion of the two."

Wilkie was now employed in preparations for his exhibition. To him this was a great and an anxious work, involving considerable expense and labour: it was one too of doubtful success, for there were not wanting men who prophesied the failure of all collections which were not made up of high history, and who hinted that Wilkie's friends had been patronizing

a style destructive to epic art, and which, not coming from such high sources, could not stand. Nor did the undertaking give offence to such alone: his brethren of the Royal Academy were indignant that an independent and separate exhibition should be opened, which was likely to allure customers from their own collection. Wilkie, with all his mildness, was, it appears, unable to appease them.

TO MISS WILKIE.

29. Phillimore Place, Kensington,
29th March, 1812.

My dear Sister,

I am exceedingly glad to find that my father is so much better, and that he is able to walk out again. I am always anxious to hear how he is, and shall be glad if you will, on that account, write to me as often as you can.

You will before now have received a letter from John in India. I had one from him at the same time enclosing a draft for 30*l.*, which he desires me to advance immediately to my father, without waiting for the three months till the bill becomes due. This I have accordingly done, and you will find enclosed a bank post bill for the amount, payable at Cupar on demand.

I am now engaged with a very great work, that of forming an exhibition of all the pictures I have painted. This is what I have been long advised to do; and although nothing of the kind has ever been done before, I have reason to think it will be attended with great success. I have engaged a very handsome

room for the purpose in Pall Mall, and have, with considerable difficulty, succeeded in getting all my pictures. Mr. Kinnear has most kindly consented to send the picture of The Fair; and Mr. Angerstein, in the most ready manner, to allow of my exhibiting The Alehouse Door. The Duke of Gloucester, Lord Mulgrave, Lord Mansfield, and Sir George Beaumont, have, with equal readiness, agreed to lend me the pictures I painted for them; and indeed all, though some have been a little backward, have at length complied.

I have got so far on with my plan, that I have already advertised it in all the newspapers; and from the attention it has already excited, I think it will make a great noise. I am in hopes of getting the Prince Regent and the Duke of Gloucester to the private view.

The exhibition requires me to lay out a great deal of money; and I have to go to town on my pony almost every day. I expect it to open some time in April, and will continue it open for near two months. It is giving great offence to some of my brethren of the Royal Academy, which I am doing all that I can to pacify, although I cannot entirely remove their dissatisfaction.

D. W.

To sooth the Royal Academy, Wilkie presented, first, his diploma picture, a small but clever performance — Boys digging for Rats, in which the eager boys, and the no less eager bristling terriers, the former digging with all their might, and the

latter snuffing the scent and trembling with impatience, form a scene all life and truth; and, secondly, he prepared for their exhibition, a sketch of The Village Festival, from his large picture of that name, and a sketch of Blindman's Buff, from a picture which he had then on the easel for the Prince Regent. But he had others to propitiate before he could secure a full exhibition of his works; for his pictures were already widely scattered. To obtain The Village Festival, he wrote to its proprietor.

TO JOHN JULIUS ANGERSTEIN, ESQ.

Sir, 29. Phillimore Place, Kensington, 3d March, 1812.

As I have been strongly advised by my friends to make an exhibition, by themselves, of all the pictures I have painted; and as I have reason to think the ensuing spring would be favourable for it, I wish most anxiously to know whether you would allow me to have the picture I had the honour of painting for you to exhibit among the number, as, from its subject, it will be of much greater consequence to the success of my plan than any other picture I have at present to offer to the public. I have already engaged a very handsome room for the purpose, in Pall Mall, nearly opposite the British Gallery; and, as the proposed exhibition will be carried on in my own name, regard for professional reputation will oblige me to see it conducted with the greatest possible respectability. The time of its commencement will be the beginning of May, and it might probably continue open for about six weeks; but in order to remove

from your mind any unfavourable impression which the appearance of opposition to the Royal Academy might occasion, I have particularly to state that it is by no means concerted with any view of interfering with that institution: my object in risking such an undertaking being solely that of deriving some advantage from it in point of emolument.

If, in consideration of these circumstances, you would be so kind as to allow me to have the picture for the necessary time, I shall esteem it as a very great obligation in addition to those I have already to acknowledge.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obliged and obedient Servant,
D. WILKIE.

He had already obtained the Earl of Mansfield's consent to exhibit the picture of The Village Politicians, which he justly regarded as the foundation of his fame; the following letter adds a request for leave to have it engraved.

TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF MANSFIELD.

29. Phillimore Place, Kensington,
24th April, 1812.

My Lord,

Since I had the honour of waiting on your Lordship, I have consulted with Mr. Raimbach about the time he might take to make a finished engraving of the picture of The Village Politicians; and he as well as myself are of opinion, that if your Lordship would allow the engraving to be begun soon after the close of my exhibition, and if it were convenient to spare

the picture for eight or nine months in the year, or during your Lordship's absence from town, the work might be carried on until it is entirely completed, without suffering any very material interruption. I must acknowledge, indeed, that I am rather gratified by the reluctance your Lordship has expressed to part with the picture for so long a period as a year and a half or two years, as it flatters me with the idea of your Lordship's favourable opinion of it; but as I do not think *a fine engraving* can be made from it in a shorter time, and as the objection may probably be obviated by the proposed arrangement, it remains for me only to add, that should my present request meet with your Lordship's favourable consideration, it will confer upon me an obligation of no very light importance.

I have the honour to be, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant,
D. Wilkie.

For the picture of The Man with the Girl's Cap, he made his request to the noble proprietor, Lord de Dunstanville.

My Lord, 29. Phillimore Place, Kensington, 18th March, 1812.

As I have formed a resolution, by the advice of some friends, of making, this spring, an exhibition of all the pictures I have painted, and have already engaged a room for the purpose in Pall Mall, I shall be particularly obliged if your Lordship will allow me the small picture of *The Man Dancing with the Girl's*

Cap for the time necessary to its being exhibited among the number.

I have also to beg, in addition to this favour, that your Lordship would be pleased to honour the undertaking itself with your countenance and recommendation.

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obliged Servant,
D. WILKIE.

He last of all solicited the Prince Regent, through West the president, a man ever ready to oblige.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT.

Mr. West having communicated to Mr. Wilkie that it is the pleasure of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent to possess a subject of his painting, Mr. Wilkie has, in obedience to the Royal Command, proceeded with a picture, the completion of which has, from a long illness, been greatly protracted; but which, when finished, will, he humbly hopes, be honoured with his Royal Highness's approbation; and he here most humbly prays, that his Royal Highness will be graciously pleased to grant him permission to exhibit the picture, in its present state, in a small exhibition he is about to make of all the pictures he has painted, as he could not presume without such high authority to include a picture, even in an unfinished state, which, in the event of its being approved of by his Royal Highness, may afterwards,

when finished, be honoured with a place in his Royal Highness's collection.

Kensington, 19th March, 1812.

To all these requests the artist received consenting replies; with which he admitted he was sensibly gratified: so hiring a room at 87. Pall Mall, arranging his pictures, so that they might get as nearly as possible the light which they required, and appointing Thomas MacDonald, an Edinburgh Academy acquaintance, and then a printseller in London, the keeper, at a salary of four guineas per week, Wilkie opened the doors of his Exhibition on the first day of May. The visiters were eager and numerous: the charm seemed not to have departed from any of his pictures; nor were the critics very captious, though the old complaint about pauper painting was raised by Hazlitt, and re-echoed by all who, unable to perceive the original merit of the collection, demanded pictures in the sublime style of Michael Angelo and Raphael.

The catalogue is now as rare as it is curious:—

A CATALOGUE OF THE PICTURES PAINTED BY D. WILKIE, R.A., NOW EXHIBITING AT 87. PALL MALL: ADMITTANCE ONE SHILLING; CATALOGUES, GRATIS.

Those that have been exhibited at the Royal Academy are marked thus *.

No.		Date.
1	The New Coat, from the tale of Jeannot and Colin. — *Voltaire* - - - -	1807
2*	Village Politicians - - - -	1806

No.		Date.
3*	A Gamekeeper - - - -	1811
4	Blindman's Buff (unfinished).	
5	Jew's Harp - - - - -	1808
6*	Blind Fiddler - - - - -	1806
7*	The Cut Finger - - - -	1809
8	The Sick Lady - - - -	1808
9	The Village Holiday - - - -	1811

In the principal Group of this Picture, a Man is represented hesitating whether to go home with his Wife, or remain with his Companions at the Public-house.

"On ae hand drink's deadly poison,
Bare ilk firm resolve awa';
On the i'ther, Jean's condition
Rave his very heart in twa."—MACNEIL.

10	A Family Picture - - - -	1810
11	Portraits of a Clergyman and his Wife -	1807
12*	The Rent Day - - - -	1807
13	Portrait of a Lady of Quality - -	1807
14	Alfred reprimanded by the Neatherd's Wife for his Inattention to the Toasting of her Cakes (*History of England*) - - -	1806
15*	The Wardrobe Ransacked - - -	1810
16*	The Card Players - - - -	1808
17	The Sunday Morning - - -	1805
18	Sketch of The Blind Fiddler.	
19	——— of the Village Politicians.	
20	——— of the Wardrobe Ransacked.	
21	——— of the Sick Lady.	
22	The Country Fair† - - - -	1804
23	Sketch of the Jew's Harp.	

† This is one of the Artist's earliest pictures: most of the figures in it are portraits of the inhabitants of a small village in Scotland, where the Fair is annually held, and near to which the picture was painted.—W.

No.		Date.
24	Sketch of the Rent Day.	
25	——— of Boys Digging for Rats*	1811
26	——— of Alfred in the Neatherd's Cottage.	
27	——— of the Card Players.	
28	——— of the Cut Finger.	
29	Study from Nature of a Gipsy Woman and Child.	1810

This exhibition extended, if it did not raise any higher, the fame of Wilkie. Those who had a taste for the country nature of a distant people, crowded to Pitlessie Fair; while those who preferred the more polite joys of old England found amusement, and mirth, too, in The Blindman's Buff. But the established lights of the collection were The Village Politicians, The Blind Fiddler, The Village Festival, The Rent Day, The Jew's Harp, The Wardrobe Ransacked, and The Cut Finger.

Exhibitions of this kind are seldom profitable: the public desire more varied entertainment than the genius of one man is likely to render; the outlay is certain and the income unsure. The whole expense of the speculation, including seventy-two pounds for advertisements, sixteen pounds for newspaper paragraphs, and sixty-five pounds for the rent of the room, amounted to four hundred and fourteen pounds. Of the profits there is no account in the memorandum book which contains the outlay: the artist used to shake his head when any one enquired about the success of his exhibition. And yet, out of this specula-

* The Picture, of which this is a sketch, was painted last year, and is placed in the Council-room of the Royal Academy, as a Diploma Picture.—W.

tion came one of the finest, as it is assuredly the saddest, of all his compositions: among his memoranda appears the following entry:—"Paid, May the 20th, for the picture of The Village Holiday, *distrained for rent*, due from Thomas Wilson to Ant. Harding, for the premises at 87. Pall Mall, 32*l.* 0*s.* 0*d.*" There is no intimation that this money was paid back; but in the law which obliged him to pay a debt which he never incurred, there is, I believe, a remedy, and which I have no doubt he had recourse to. To the trouble which this untoward event caused, I am told, on such authority as I cannot question, that we owe the picture of Distraining for Rent. When did vexation produce such fruit? The exhibition closed on the 2d of June; that of the Royal Academy soon followed, and both aided in sustaining and extending the fame of Wilkie.

Health had now returned, and the artist wrought to make up for lost time with a diligence which alarmed his friends. Of these Lord Mulgrave, a nobleman as kind as he was amiable, to allure him from studies which threatened the worst consequences, united with his lady in persuading him to visit Mulgrave Castle, of the beauties of which he had got a glimpse in the year 1807. His visit was made in the shooting season, and thus he speaks of it:—

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

My dear Brother, Mulgrave Castle, 5th Sept. 1812.

I should have written to you by a frank had it not so happened that Lord Mulgrave left this place

for Scarborough soon after I arrived. This need not, however, prevent you from directing your letters for me under cover to his lordship, as he is expected back in the course of four days. I left Dr. Thomson's on Tuesday last as I intended, but got no further on that day than Huntingdon, being detained there all night by the pressing importunities of some friends. Next morning I got on to Stamford, but as no coach passed through that town for York till ten at night, I spent the intermediate time in seeing Burleigh House, a place I had long wished to see for its pictures; and although they did not come up to my expectation, the house and furniture together interested me greatly. I travelled all night, and reached York in very good time next day to see the cathedral, and to get some rest, previous to the setting out of the mail for Whitby, and, after a second night's travelling, which I find has done me no harm, I reached Lord Mulgrave's with perfect ease yesterday morning. I found Lord Mulgrave, General Phipps, and Lord Normanby, preparing to go to Scarborough, the borough the General represents, but as they are only to meet the Corporation, they expect to return by Tuesday. I am at present therefore with Lady Mulgrave and the young family, whose company I find exceedingly agreeable. I have been exploring the roads with them, and have great delight in finding out the places I was formerly acquainted with, and in discovering the improvements that have since been made. My time must of course be very idly spent, but I find my health so far very greatly improved by

it, and shall not scruple therefore to persist in it till I return.

D. W.

Wherever Wilkie went, painting was seldom out of his head; though he had not the pencil in his hand, he had an eye which allowed no useful character or posture to escape, and a memory which retained the impression as surely as a book.

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

Mulgrave Castle, 11th Sept. 1812.

I have been amusing myself in every sort of way here but that of painting, and I have been out twice shooting partridges for the first time I ever tried the sport. The first day I shot a crow flying over our heads, but the second day was so fortunate as to kill a partridge. I go out with the gamekeeper, and we travel on ponies to the ground where the game is to be found. He manages the dogs, and as soon as a covey is raised we both fire as well as we can.

I do not remember any thing else to mention. My friends here are exceedingly kind, but I must try to be in London by the end of the month.

D. W.

He tired of the magnificent hospitality of Mulgrave Castle, of the pleasure of shooting at—for he only sometimes drew blood—partridges and pheasants, and, longing for the easel, again returned to Kensington on the 1st of October, with improved health and

renewed spirits. "I got to Phillimore Place last night," he thus wrote to his brother Thomas, "one day later than I intended, and am now putting every thing to rights with a view of setting to work as soon as possible. I shall expect you early on Sunday: I have asked Haydon to dinner, and intend to astonish you both in the second course with a hare of my own shooting."

The declining state of his father's health seems to have dwelt much on Wilkie's mind at this time. Various attempts had been made to provide a helper, as an assistant is called in the north, to ease him in the performance of duties which were pressing sorely on him; but many obstacles, some of a conscientious nature, interposed. At length the welcome intelligence arrived, that the aid which was sought was found. To his sister, who could now sympathise in his joys and his sorrows, he thus wrote on the 26th of October:—

My dear Sister, 29: Phillimore Place.

I am exceedingly rejoiced to hear of our success at last in getting a helper for my father. I had a letter from Mr. Lister at the same time with your own, in answer to one I had written to him upon the subject, and from all that I learn from him and from yourself, I am inclined to form a most favourable opinion of the young man appointed. The terms, upon reflection, are certainly high. The 40*l.* salary, in addition to the lodging and maintenance, in whatever way they can be contrived or computed, will certainly come to more than the 60*l.* we had intended as the extent of our offer; but, taking it independent of

the terms, I do not see any great objection to his being taken into the house, considering the recommendations that those people are inclined to give him in whose house he lived before. There is no doubt something awkward in having a stranger constantly at one's table; but this will wear off in the course of a short time, and you may even find some compensation in his company when you get better acquainted with him. It will make his situation much more respectable than if he were living in any other house in the parish, and certainly much more convenient for all parties than his being at Cupar, or at any place of an equal distance.

I had written to Mr. Lister proposing a scheme for his consideration, which is now unnecessary. His attention in the whole of this business has been most friendly, and of especial service. When Mr. Glen commences his labours I shall be glad to know. It will be proper to arrange with him the periods for the payment of his salary.

Mr. Cleghorn came to London about a week ago. He tells me that our father looks full as well as he did when I was last in Scotland, from which, and from the circumstance of his being able to preach on Sunday, I conclude that his health is really *better*, and I hope that it may long continue so.

You may tell my mother that my forgetfulness in not mentioning the arrival of the chairs does not arise from any insensibility of their merits. I have got them carefully stowed in my bedroom, and have only shown them as yet to a few select friends, who, I assure you, have admired them very much. It was at first

my intention to get them altered to a modern fashion; but I now begin to think them so complete the way they are, that I am on the look-out for other furniture to suit them; and I think I shall be able to get a room fitted up entirely in the same style. A friend has advised me to try and procure another arm-chair to make out the set. Does Mrs. Wemyss know where the other elbow-chair went to? or does she think it would be easily got hold of? If I could get a Turkey carpet, an old fashioned table, a cabinet and suitable window-curtains, my furniture for a room would be complete. I know that style of furniture will look affected, and that some will laugh at it; but I have confidence enough in the influence of my own taste to assure myself that it will be admired in me. Haydon likes the chairs very much, and encourages me in my feeling for old furniture.

D. W.

David Wilkie, minister of Cults, preached indeed on the last Sunday in October to his people, and was regarded as improving in health by his parishioners; but he knew that death was dealing with him. Though he continued calm, and even cheerful, he only smiled when hopes of his being heard again in the pulpit were indulged in by his friends, and said, looking out of the window, "I will never see the leaves grow green on these trees again." Nor did he: he died full of years, and with the tranquillity of a Christian, on the 1st day of December, 1812. The feelings of his eminent son are thus calmly expressed:—

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 7th Dec. 1812.

The melancholy relation of my dear father's death, which James's letter has so feelingly acquainted us with, has afflicted Thomas and myself very much; and although such an event cannot be said to have been altogether unexpected, it has shocked us exceedingly, by the suddenness with which it has at last taken place.

The arduous duties which yourself, and particularly my dear mother, have so long and so affectionately discharged towards him, must have no doubt prepared you for what has happened; but even the recollection of your own kindness to my father, although an invaluable consolation to your own hearts, must now add considerably to your grief for his loss. I can conceive what your feelings must have been at first, and although you may have both now got more composed, I know that it will be some time before the deep impression it must have made on your minds can be forgotten. It is our duty, however, to consider an affliction of this sort as intended, by the great Disposer of all things, for our our good; and while it teaches us the uncertainty of human affairs, this consideration should fortify our minds to meet with becoming firmness the changes it will naturally give rise to.

Before this reaches you the funeral will have been got over, and I have no doubt, but with the greatest propriety, and you will have probably begun to give some serious attention to what is best to be done in

the situation to which my dear mother and yourself are now reduced. At the distance at which I am, I cannot offer you any advice till I hear your own sentiments; but whatever you may think proper to determine upon, I shall be most willing to give you every assistance in my power to carry into effect. I shall thank you to write to me very soon and very fully on this subject.

As various expenses must have been incurred by the funeral, and in getting mourning for yourselves, I have enclosed ten pounds for my mother, to be disposed of as she shall think proper. As the engagement with Mr. Glen will, in consequence, be at an end, I shall be glad to know in what way we are to settle with him for the time he has officiated.

It is a most lucky circumstance that James happened to be so near at hand, as I have no doubt but he would be of very great assistance and comfort to my mother. I hope he will be able to stay with you for some time, as he may be of great service in advising what should be done.

It is a great satisfaction to me to hear that your friends and neighbours have been so attentive, and I shall thank you to express to them my obligation,—particularly to Mr. Glen and to Mr. Vial. Do write soon, and remember me most affectionately to my dear mother and to James.

D. W.

Mrs. Coppard and her daughters beg to be most kindly remembered to my mother and yourself. They are very much interested about you, and participate

very sincerely in the affliction my father's death has occasioned. They are the most affectionate people that can be.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 15th Dec. 1812.

Every circumstance that is at all connected with my father's death, or that relates to the change it must occasion in our family, is at present particularly interesting to us; and as we have no other way to participate in the feelings with which my dear mother and yourself must me affected than by a frequent correspondence, I beg that we may hear from you as often as you can.

I wrote to you two days after I heard of the sad event, and sent my letter to Thomas, with directions to enclose in it a Bank post-bill, of which my share should be ten pounds. He added to it an equal sum, which, considering his means, is very greatly to his credit.

All my friends here are very much concerned at our loss. I may particularly mention my friend Haydon as one of the number. I sent for him as soon as the account came, and he has been with me several times since. He desires to be particularly remembered to my mother and to yourself.

D. W.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 29th Dec. 1812.

You may conceive how much I have been grieved and gratified with the letter my dear father was writing to me so immediately before his death. I shall preserve it as a most sacred memorial as long as I live. It cannot but be particularly pleasing to us all to find it expressive of the satisfaction which the appointment of a proper helper seems to have given to his mind, and that his former uneasiness upon this subject had not only been completely removed, but that he seemed to apprehend no inconvenience from the terms upon which the helper had been engaged. I feel, indeed, when I read it, as if I were conversing with him the same as you were yourselves the day before his death. I shall send a copy of it to John in India, to whom, as he is mentioned in it, it cannot fail to be interesting.

I have now received your own letter, and am very glad at last to learn what my mother and yourself would like best to be done. Although you have not given me the information I requested James to endeavour to obtain for us, you have greatly satisfied me by mentioning all your own ideas upon the present situation of our affairs. It has occurred to me, and it has been mentioned to me by some of my friends, that my mother and yourself might be brought to reside with me in London; but as I have as yet no house of my own, I do not think (much as I should like to see you both here), that this would

be a very practicable plan at present. I have accordingly been thinking what place you could get in Fifeshire. If you go to a town, which, from what you mention about John's children, would be best, I would recommend St. Andrew's; but as P. Cleghorn tells me that living and house-rent are high there, from the number of new inhabitants, I have some doubts about it. Cupar might do; but that also has, to my mind, considerable objections. What you say of Edinburgh I never thought of; but if we can be assured that the expenses of housekeeping there are not materially greater than in Fifeshire, I would recommend Edinburgh by all means. It is not, however, on account of my father's relations being there, for relations will be the same all the world over,—it is because I myself might be of greater service to you in a society like that in Edinburgh than in that of Fifeshire; and as it would bring you thirty miles nearer London, it would save at least a day's travelling in case Thomas or I were coming to see you.

It is of much greater consequence that you should have a few friends you know and can depend upon, than a large circle of acquaintance. I think the offer my grandfather has made of part of his house is very handsome, and certainly proceeds from kindness; but as I do not think it would be proper for my mother to remain in the parish in a situation that might make her less respected by the parishioners than she was before when living in the manse, I should decline it in the most respectful manner possible.

The information I wished James to obtain for me

was the amount of the annuity my mother and probably yourself are entitled to from the Widows' Fund, and also the common rent of such a house as you will want. If you still feel inclined to go to Edinburgh, I had better write to Mr. Lister on the subject.

Wherever my mother may go, she may expect to find friends. Do you think your healths will not be injured by living in Edinburgh? Would such a house as Mrs. Baron's answer your purpose? I regret exceedingly not being near you. You must make up for it by writing as often as you can, and telling me every thing.

D. W.

The manse of Cults was now no longer to be the residence of a man which had made it distinguished, —a change in every way touching; for the place had become from long acquaintance endeared to the family, and the family to the people around: to leave a house over which such a halo of recollection hovered was to them a sore dispensation. Wilkie's eyes ever glistened at the mention of Cults. The spiritual wants of the parish craved a minister, and the minister required a manse.

TO MISS WILKIE.

29. Phillimore Place, Kensington,
7th Jan. 1813.

My dear Sister,

I wish my mother and yourself many happy returns of the season. The year that has passed has unfortunately concluded with events of a very

melancholy nature to our family; but we may at least hope that the worst is over, and that the year which has begun may not only open to us brighter and happier prospects, but that it may also realize them to the utmost of our expectations. With this view I have a proposal to make, which, whatever my mother may think of it, I know you will prefer to any new-year's present I can send you. It is this: that instead of going to Cupar, St. Andrew's, or Edinburgh, as we were thinking of at first, my mother and yourself must make up your minds to come to *London*. This is a plan which I must say never occurred as a practicable scheme till within these few days; but I have so well considered it, and am now so forcibly convinced of its propriety, that it appears to me not only to be the best, but almost the only line that can be pursued. I have objections in my own mind to all the other places that have been mentioned. The number of acquaintances you might have is no recommendation to any of them; and the expense of living, even with all the care that could be observed, would render your circumstances, and our apprehensions about you, very distressing indeed. It is, I assure you, with very great delight that I am enabled to make a proposal, which will not only be of essential benefit to ourselves, but will also contribute materially to my advantage. You know it has been long my wish to take a house in London or its neighbourhood, and that I have been chiefly prevented doing so by the want of furniture; and as my mother may now be able to provide me with that, there will no longer be any difficulty. And another

requisite that I am (perhaps fortunately) not yet supplied with—a person to take care of my house—will also be amply supplied by my mother herself. I beg, therefore, that my mother may take this proposition of mine into her most serious consideration. I know she will at first have objections, and that the length of the journey and the change in her situation will appear immense. With yourself I need no arguments: I know while you are reading this letter your breast is beating with delight at the thoughts of coming to London. Endeavour to advise our mother to this removal; but I beg she will not consult anybody in the neighbourhood: there is no one she can go to who knows any thing about the matter, and neighbours may only perplex her with their advice. To prevent any hasty determination, I should wish her to take a week to consider of it, and she will be better able to judge of its propriety herself than any one she can consult. I cannot say that the advice of any one has influenced me in recommending this plan; but I have mentioned it to some of my friends. I spoke of it first to Mr. Stodart, who approved of it highly; and then to Haydon, who was delighted, and said that nothing could give him greater pleasure than to see you both in London. I next mentioned it to Mrs. Coppard, who, although it was accompanied with the unpleasant intimation of the necessity I should be under of leaving her, recommended it very strongly, and said that it had even occurred to herself as the best plan I could adopt a considerable time before I mentioned it. She has, indeed, offered me all the assistance in her power towards carrying

it into effect. I should add, that Thomas was also consulted when he came out last, and that he also concurs with the rest in approving of it.

The time I should propose for your coming to London would be in May or June.

D. W.

To his sister this was a welcome proposal. "I had a letter from Helen," he thus writes his brother Thomas: "she is surprised and delighted with the prospect of coming to London. My mother, as I expected, is perplexed about it; but Helen is using what arguments she can to convince her of its propriety." Mrs. Wilkie, a shrewd, sensible, and discerning lady, as ever presided over the domestic establishment of a manse,—was reluctant to part with Pitlessie, where she was born,—where her father, now a venerable old man, dwelt,—and with scenes where she had long lived in high esteem, and brought up with honour four sons and a daughter.

TO MISS WILKIE.

29. Phillimore Place, Kensington,
25th Jan. 1813.

My dear Sister,

I am glad to find by your letter that you are so pleased with the plan of coming to London, and I am now in hopes that the scruple which I foresaw my mother would have may be very soon got over. The more I reflect upon it myself the more I am convinced of its propriety; and every person I have mentioned it to has, by his approbation, confirmed me in the reso-

lution I have formed. It appears to me that it will be by far the cheapest plan that can be followed. I think I could keep a house, if I had it furnished, at nearly the same expense that my present lodging costs me: I include rent and every thing in this, and your being with me would not add greatly to the expense, and would certainly save an outlay of house-rent in another place. In addition to this, my mother and yourself could be no where so well attended to as near us, and your situations, if at a distance, would be a perpetual source of uneasiness to us. By the time this reaches you, I shall therefore take it for granted that my mother has made up her mind to the coming south, and that the only thing that now remains to be considered is, how our plan of operations is to be arranged.

I have been looking at a number of houses in this neighbourhood, for about Kensington would answer me best, from its healthy situation, and from the convenience of coaches passing through it at all hours of the day. There are at present a great number of houses to let, but they are notwithstanding very high in the rents, and I do not expect to get a house that will answer for less than 70*l.* or 80*l.* a year. We shall require a house with about ten rooms in it, including kitchen and wash-house.

I have been consulting some friends about what sort of furniture you should bring with you from Scotland, and I find them generally of opinion, that you should bring only that which is valuable. I know you will regret selling many things; but I do not think there will be any great loss, as the same money

will nearly purchase as good ones here. My father's publication of the *Theory of Interest* should, I think, be packed up in sôme box, and carefully brought with the other things. Of the kitchen furniture I do not know that you should bring any, except the old brass pan for making jelly, and any thing else you may consider of value. There is an old Dutch press in one of the closets that my mother got from Mrs. Birrell; what state is that in? If it were not an article of great weight, might not that be brought?

I saw Mrs. Tait some days ago, and mentioned to her your coming to London. You cannot think how delighted she was about it; you will find her a very kind friend when you come. She told me her brother-in-law, Mr. Gillespie, had been appointed successor to my father. John Anderson has been delighted with the thoughts of seeing you all in London, and his friend, John Wilkie, has taken a particular interest in it, and recommends it strongly. Mrs. Coppard and her daughters wish that we may get some house near them, which I also wish very much. I do not know that there is a Scotch church near this, but there is a chapel close by, that Mrs. Patterson, an old acquaintance and cousin of my father's, goes to. I think if my mother were once accustomed to the Church of England service, she would like it very much. I have enclosed a note to my grandfather, which you may, after reading it, send under cover to him at Pitlessie.

D. W.

Having fully satisfied his mother's scruples about removal, Wilkie had next to overcome those of his

grandfather and grandmother, who were loth to part with their daughter and their grand-daughter, now when, in the vale of years, their society had grown as valuable as it was necessary; but though he respected their motives, he hoped better of his mother's good sense than to fear that she would finally be guided by them, nor did those venerable people continue obstinately to oppose a removal which went to reunite a separated family.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 1st March, 1813.

I wrote you a good while ago, and enclosed a note to my grandfather, explaining to him my intention of bringing my mother and yourself to London. To the letter I sent you I have had an answer from Edinburgh by a private hand, which mentions the complete concurrence of our friends in that place with the plan I have proposed; what my grandfather's and grandmother's sentiments are I have heard from John Anderson only; and although their scruples and objections may be very strong, I decidedly think with him, that they ought to have no great weight with my mother, and it is her scruples, and hers alone, that I am anxious to remove. Of these, the change to another country and a new society will seem very great; but wherever she moves to from the manse of Cults she will feel a change, and perhaps none would be more irksome to her, than to move to such a place as my grandfather and grandmother would entirely approve of. She would, I have no doubt, prefer going

to Edinburgh; but she has to consider whether she has not still greater inducements to come to London. She would find considerable amusement in taking charge of a house, and would be cheered by the variety of occurrences that are daily taking place, while to the society of Thomas and myself, which she could not have in Edinburgh, she would have that of my friends, who are constantly coming about me, and although most of them are English, I conceive that she would be greatly pleased with them.

All these things considered, I have no doubt but my mother would soon get reconciled to this place; and the kindness I think she would meet with from all my particular friends here, would make her highly pleased with the English people. I had a long letter from Mr. Crokat the other day, asking me to come and take a house near to him, as he regrets much the distance I have got to; and I have had a similar application from a lady, a friend of Cleghorn's, who lives in another quarter, but as I have got, in some degree, habituated to Kensington, and find the situation healthy and convenient, I do not intend to leave this place if I can be accommodated at all to my mind.

I wish to know what time it would be necessary for my mother to leave. I was calculating that if you were in London in June, it might answer every purpose. I am quite uncertain what number of the books should be brought, but I would have all the best ones brought to London. I beg you will write soon, and be active in letting me know what can be done.

D. W.

Having prevailed in his wish to remove his mother and sister to London, Wilkie next proceeded to seek such a habitation as would enable him to pursue his own studies, afford accommodation for his augmented household, and from its situation maintain, by fresh air and agreeable walks, the health which had lately cost him so much to preserve. Norton-Street, Sol's Row, Portland Street, and Manor Place, where he painted his Village Politicians, Blind Fiddler, Jew's Harp, Cut Finger, Rent Day, Village Holiday, and Blindman's Buff, are still held in remembrance by all who feel those truly dramatic compositions: he now made choice for his residence of 24. Lower Phillimore Place, Kensington, a new and handsome house, and wrote to his sister a description of it, which will be welcome to all, and they are many, who are curious about the dwelling-places of men of genius.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 24th March, 1813.

I have now almost entirely fixed on the house I am to take, and that, after looking at many, and considering well every circumstance, is the one I mentioned before, No. 24. Phillimore Place, within five doors of Mrs. Coppard's. The house is not yet finished, but it will be completely so by the month of June. The only thing that has prevented me from concluding a bargain arises from an arrangement I wish to make with the landlord about altering one of the rooms to make a painting-room. The largest rooms in the house have their windows all to the

south, which disqualifies them from being used as such. This reduces me to the alternative of painting in one of the back rooms as it now is, which would rather confine me for room, or of enlarging it, by making a sort of bow-window out from the back of the house. Whatever way I may determine this, I have no doubt of taking the house: it has every thing to recommend it in point of situation, and the house itself is elegant, commodious, and very well built. The rooms are two kitchens, or rather a kitchen and wash-house: these are under ground, but they have an area all round them, with coal-cellars, &c. On the floor on which you enter from the street there are two parlours, the front one a very handsome room, and about the size of the parlour at Cults; the back one much smaller. On the story above this there are two drawing-rooms; the principal one that looks to the street or road is a very fine room, and opens into the back drawing-room with large folding doors. Above these there are two stories more, and these make four very excellent bed-rooms. At the back of the house is a garden, fully larger than the plot of grass before the door at Cults, and surrounded by a very high wall. The house is supplied with water by pipes, the same as the houses in Edinburgh, but the house itself will be fitted up in a much neater manner, and have much better accommodation than any of the houses of an equal size in that place. My mother will probably think that there will be too many rooms for us, but I engage that we shall find use for them. I shall require the two drawing-rooms to myself constantly, and you will require the two parlours. Of the four bed-rooms

there will be one for my mother and yourself, one for me, one for the servant, and a spare one for Thomas, when he comes to see us.

I wish every thing of the smaller articles to be brought that looks like a curiosity. The pictures, such as the two I got premiums for, may be taken off the frames, and rolled up together; any thing else that seems curious you may bring, but the old drawings I made at Graham's Academy I really think it might be as well to burn. The drawing of Cleghorn is not worth sending to his family, so I beg you will not. My father's manuscripts you may bring with you, and any old china you may have would certainly be of use. The old lay figure I would rather like to bring.

I am to be engaged this year in arranging the pictures for the Exhibition at the Royal Academy. I am to begin the week after next, and I expect it will take me and the other gentlemen nearly a month.

D. W.

The reader cannot fail to have remarked the methodical order in which the artist arranges the removal of the family furniture and effects from Cults; the care which he expresses for all old and picturesque things; and the desire he feels that all to which his parents had an attachment should be transferred to London, so that his mother and sister should, when they drew in their chairs and sat down in Phillimore Place, be surrounded by familiar things. How many of those household matters mingled in the domestic scenes of his fortunes, would require a minute in-

quiry: an old Gothic chair and an old copper saucepan were favourites; and often, as I may say, sat for their likenesses, and always with effect. Amid these directions he found time to write the following letter, which gives a true, and as curious as true, account of the acts and deeds of the "Hanging Committee" of his day in arranging the pictures for the Exhibition.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 2d May, 1813.

I was glad to find by your last letter to Thomas, that the delay which must take place before he can go to Scotland will not be inconvenient to you. I only hope that you have taken into account the arrangements which Mr. Gillespie may find it necessary to make with regard to his ordination. Mr. Crokat is to set off immediately for Leith with his family, and from the explanation I have given him of the importance of having Thomas to assist you in your removal, I have no doubt he will return to set him at liberty as soon as he can. You may now consider what you can most easily send before you come yourselves; and in this I would have you to be regulated rather by what you can best spare, than by what I may want. I do not think it would be worth while for me to take up house till you come, as it would be for so short a time; but the more articles of furniture I can put into the house before your arrival, the more comfortable it will be for you. You may send the books, at least those you thought most valuable, as you proposed, in the Dutch press. Some

of the beds and mattresses may also be sent, and any other pieces of furniture that you may think can be most easily packed up.

I have been considering, with Thomas, what you have said about the disposal of the money my mother has got by her, and we are most decidedly of opinion that you should bring it all to London with you. What I would then recommend is to lay it out in the public funds, where you can have about five per cent. for it, and from whence you can always remove it at a day's notice, and without giving offence to any one.

You would hear that I had been appointed to arrange the pictures this year at the Exhibition. I have been employed about it, with other two academicians, for a month, and have now completed it entirely. I found it a very severe labour for me at first, but it afterwards became very agreeable, and has improved my health amazingly. I went every morning by the stage, and returned in the evening. As the Council always dined together, and had every other refreshment at the expense of the Academy, you may believe we lived well, and found great entertainment in our labours. We had many a squabble, as you may suppose, during the arrangement, about who should have the best places; but as no one was admitted, this was all confined to ourselves, and although we had the interests of all the members to balance, and take care of, as well as those of our own particular friends, and those of the many poor fellows who had no friends, we have adjusted them all so well that there is not a single complaint. The first persons

we thought of were our own three selves, as you may suppose; and, acting on this principle, my picture of Blindman's Buff was accordingly placed in the principal centre in the great room. After attending to the more weighty claims, the pictures of my friends Jackson, Robertson, and others, were put in excellent places, and not only is the arrangement liked as an agreeable combination of shape and colours, but every body seems to think it has been managed with the greatest judgment and impartiality. On Friday a great number of ladies and gentlemen were admitted by tickets to the private view, and on Saturday we had our great dinner, which, for the splendour of our company, was perhaps the greatest we ever had. As a member of the Council I was placed in a principal situation of the room, and Mr. Raeburn as one of the body, and as my particular friend, was placed close by me. On my other hand were the crown lawyers and some members of parliament. One circumstance which has made both of these days particularly gratifying to me is, that my picture for the Prince Regent has given the most universal satisfaction. Every body seems to like it, and many think it is the best I have painted. I have been told that the Prince Regent, who saw it before it went to the Exhibition, was also very much pleased with it. All this is the more delightful to me, as the length of time I was in completing it was a subject of very great uneasiness.

D. W.

The next letter is a continuation of the picture.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, 29. Phillimore Place, 17th May, 1813.

I have got all the bustle of hanging the pictures over, and have been since that time only employed in dinners and parties. I was at a very grand dinner about a week ago, which was called the Commemoration Dinner of the late Sir Joshua Reynolds. It was given by the Governors of the British Institution at the opening of the Exhibition of Sir Joshua's pictures. I was asked, as one of the Royal Academy, and, besides a great number of the nobility present, we were honoured with the company of the Prince Regent. When we were in the Exhibition room before the dinner began, his Royal Highness, much to my surprise, came up and spoke to me. He told me he was delighted with the picture I had painted for him, and wished me to paint, at my leisure, a companion picture of the same size. I of course bowed, and said I was highly sensible of the honour. The Marquis of Stafford, who was with him, then said that I had promised to paint him a picture for several years, but had never done it, and he was afraid he should never get a picture from me; when His Royal Highness said, by way of apology, that his Lordship should consider I had been very long ill; and added, turning to me, that he would be very glad to have another picture from me, after I had satisfied the Marquis of Stafford. You may believe it is very gratifying to me to find the Prince so much pleased with the picture; I have also the happiness to find

that the public are so too. It attracts very great attention in the Exhibition, and is fully as much liked as any I ever painted. I am now going on with a smaller picture: the subject of it is a young man delivering a letter of introduction to a city gentleman.

D. W.

The picture of Blindman's Buff, which the Prince Regent so justly admired, sprung from the familiar manners of the land: it had, in an unfinished state, attracted much notice in the artist's exhibition the year before, and continues still, as an engraving, to demand and deserve attention. The scene of the picture is laid in the large room of a public-house, in which soldiers are quartered, and all the utensils used in preparing good cheer are arranged on the walls: the limits have been on this occasion extended, by clearing away the tables and piling up stools and chairs, leaving space only for the too old or the too young to sit and safely look on the pastime in which they are unable to share. The sport has already commenced; the lot to be Blindman has fallen on a young peasant who, with a napkin tied over his eyes, his feet feeling their way, his hands held out, like those of Elymas the Sorcerer, in the Cartoons, is groping for a substitute amid the titter of girls and the laughter of lads. The humour of the thing consists in his attempts to grope out a successor, and in the resolution of the audience to outwit and baffle him. To accomplish this he listens to the thick breathings of his tormenters, and makes sudden bounds in their direc-

tion, that he may seize some one whom he is entitled to blindfold and sport with in his turn. But this proves no easy matter: the audience elude him by cowering low or leaping aside; and shout in his ear, pull at his coat-tail, vex him with jibes and mocks, while all the time he hurries from end to end of the room, and from side to side, gropes on benches and feels under them, till, badgered with odd questions, ends of queer verse, and whirled about like a feather in an eddy, he is either worn out, or some one from compassion allows himself to be caught, and renews the fun and provokes the laughter afresh.

This rural game affords much scope for skilful incident and grouping, and that quaint and graceful humour in which Wilkie excelled; nor did he fail to avail himself of these advantages. There is much fun and glee going on besides what really belongs to the game: a young man, under pretence of eluding the Blindman, is enjoying unseen the luxury of a true love-grip; a young woman cowers by the side of a settle, less to escape from the approaching hand of the Blindman, than to enjoy the caresses of two lovers, one of whom clasps her round the waist in silent ecstasy, and the other is obtaining kisses in abundance from her willing lips: two boys, in the whirl and hurry of the scene, have, much to the detriment of their shins, upset a chair, while a shoemaker, extending both arms as if he drew a long and refractory thread, pinches himself up to escape the all but touching hand of the Blindman, heedless that he is squeezing a boy behind, who with rueful looks endures, not without tears, the unexpected crush. Even

the old man who swept the public crossing, moved by the merriment, looks in at the door, and seems disposed to quit his broom and join in the fun. Such is the glee and whirl of the whole, that none of the actors perceive these episodical incidents—all eyes are blind to aught save the business of the scene. The colouring is very vivid.

His Portrait from recollection of a Young Lady deceased, though not overlooked in the admiration of Blindman's Buff, obtained but faint praise, though it had the merit of simplicity and truth.

In August, the painter had the pleasure of receiving his mother and sister in London, and of seating them at his own fireside, in Phillimore Place. I have heard the former describe the pangs which she endured at heart when she parted with the Manse of Cults, and bade farewell to Stratheden and the little village of Pitlessie. She was not insensible to the charms of London and the elegance of its society; but she long sighed for the hills of Fife, with the sight, and as she said, the sound of its living waters. As for the artist himself, with his mother, and sister, and brother, at his side, and much of the furniture from the Manse around him, he could imagine himself, as he said, in Stratheden again, till he looked out at the window and missed the blue Lomonds. He added, that if he were desired to name the happiest hour of his life, it was when he first saw his honoured mother and much-loved sister sitting beside him while he was painting: the subject, too,—The Bagpiper—was one which had been present to his mind from boyhood, and he now proceeded to embody it in his best colours.

The Bagpiper was painted for Sir Francis Freeling, a lover of literature as well as art. Where the feelings of the painter were when he conceived this picture, may readily be guessed, for a part of the gable of the old kirk of Cults appears over the right shoulder of the musician, who "screws the pipes and gaurs them skirl," with a quiet gladness glowing on his brow, for he is not unconscious (what piper is?) that he is largely gifted with the power to please. The piper was originally, I have heard, in tartan; but tartan had not then become, through the genius of Scott, popular in England, and the painter rubbed out that symbol of the far north, and put him on a lowland costume—a change to be lamented; for the screech of a bagpipe is as natural to the tartan as the scream of the eagle. He is a hale weather-beaten old man, more conversant with country than with town, and has piped more where "Gorcocks flew," than where the lute sounded: his hands are large and powerful, and as fit for wielding the claymore as for touching "the ebon pipe with ivory virles bound;" his cheek and eye are of the north, and wants only the brilliant tartan to be a Macpherson or a MacIvor.

His next work, and, though small, one of his happiest, was painted for Samuel Dobree, Esq., a London merchant, and one who united a love of art with the rarer desire to encourage it. This picture is The Letter of Introduction, which originated in the reception which the artist himself experienced, it is said, from one of the small wits about town, Caleb Whiteford by name, discoverer of "the cross read-

ings" in newspapers, and who set up for a judge in art as well as literature. Some one desirous to do a good turn to David, when he came first to town, gave him a note to Caleb, who, struck with his very youthful look, inquired how old he was, "Really now," said the artist, with the hesitation he bestowed on most questions. "Ha!" exclaimed Caleb; "introduce a man to me who knows not how old he is!" and regarded him with that dubious look which is the chief charm of the picture. This was in his mind when he formed the resolution to paint the subject; and Caleb and his well-arranged bookcase, little folding desk, bundles of papers regularly labelled, sword suspended from a nail in the wall to mark his gentle descent, for he was a Whiteford of that ilk; and a china jar to mark the man of vertu on the floor, sat, as I may say, for his portrait. We have only to add a lad with a country air, who has presented the letter, and the old man to whom it is addressed turning half round in his chair while breaking the seal, and eyeing the other with a look of doubt and suspicion, in which a dog is seen to join with all the intelligence of its master. When The Letter of Introduction was finished, the artist bethought him of a wish which Mr. Dobree had expressed to possess one of his pictures, and wrote accordingly.

TO SAMUEL DOBREE, ESQ.

Dear Sir, 24. Lower Phillimore Place, 17th March, 1814.

In consequence of your having done me the favour to write to me about two years ago, mention-

ing that you were still desirous of possessing one of my pictures, agreeable to the original commission you gave me, I take the liberty of stating to you that I am now finishing two pictures, both of moderate size, and if either of them, upon inspection, should be found in other respects to meet your views, it shall be most readily at your service.

As I intend them both for the Royal Academy Exhibition this year, and must send them in by the 3d of April, it will be desirable that you should see them early. The distance of Kensington makes me regret asking you to come so far to see them; but if you can do me that honour, and will be kind enough to mention the time, I shall have much pleasure in being in the way to receive you.

I am, dear Sir, &c.

D. W.

Mr. Dobree at once called upon Wilkie, and bought The Letter of Introduction at the price of 250 guineas.

For the events of this part of his life I have before me a little book, entitled,

"A Journal of Occurrences from the time of taking possession of the House, No. 24. Lower Phillimore Place, Kensington;".

from which I have made the few extracts that follow:—

1813. *Aug.* 30. Moved part of the furniture from No. 29. and took possession of the house No. 24. in the evening with my mother and sister.

Sept. 15. Sent my sketch of Bourn Kitchen to Dr. Thomson's, to be shown to Lord Delawarr.

16. Haydon came out in the morning, and idled the whole day with us till 11 o'clock at night.

Oct. 21. Completed almost entirely this day my picture of The Letter of Introduction.

26. Mr. Raimbach sent me an advanced proof of The Village Politicians. It appears to me particularly fine: the heads are done with great truth and spirit, and the hands as well felt as any thing I ever saw in engraving. It is, upon the whole, the most correct copy of a picture that can be imagined. It only wants a little more of the white paper to be seen on the high lights.

Nov. 5. Called on Mr. Callcott, and saw him engaged on a picture which he was going through with on a new, and, I think, a very improved principle; he was painting it thin and completing the objects at once.

8. Began a sketch of a new subject of a love-making, from the Duncan Gray of Burns.

11. Began my picture from Duncan Gray; the same size as The Letter of Introduction.

20. Began a copy of the small portraits of my father and mother.

26. Completed the copy. Done for my brother John in India.

Dec. 16. Saw at the Royal Academy the prints from the Campo Santo of Pisa, which struck me very much, as they show how gradually the art must have been revived in Italy, and how little the invention of its principles can be attributed even to the great minds of Raphael or M. Angelo, or to any other single individual.

28. Rubbed out a petticoat in my picture which had taken me three days in painting. Began it anew, and tried to paint it much thinner in the half tints, and only thick in the high lights, and to keep a little more of the orange in its colour.

Sent off some pictures to my brother in India; viz. a copy of the portraits of my father and mother; a small sketch or copy of part of my picture of Blind Man's Buff; a small sketch of a Bagpiper; a study of an Old Woman, made in Leicestershire; and three portraits of Thomas, Helen, and myself. The pictures were all painted very thin, and with nearly one coat of colour. The vehicles used were *gumtion*, but the three last with drying oil and mastic varnish.

1814. *Jan.* 17. Painted the left hand of the old man in the picture of Duncan Gray.

30. Mulready came to sit for the head of Duncan Gray, which I painted in entirely.

Feb. 1. Painted the left hand of Duncan Gray.

13. Wrote a letter to Mr. Raeburn, urging him to put forward all his strength at the next Exhibition.

18. I proposed at the Academy that associate engravers should in future be required to deposit a specimen of their abilities in the Academy, before receiving their diplomas; agreed to by the Council.

23. Painted the blue gown of the old woman this and the preceding day; painted also the needle-book, and part of the table.

April 3. Dr. Baillie called by appointment to see my picture of The Refusal [Duncan Gray], which he liked very much, and bought of me for 330 guineas.*

* Dr. Baillie afterwards exchanged it with Wilkie for The Pedlar.

7. Began my sketch of The Distraining for Rent.

20. Began a portrait of Mrs. Coppard and family.

22. Made a return of my property or income for this year, which, at an average of the three last years, I find arises in clear profit to 589*l.*, from which deducting two thirds of the rent of my house, makes it so near the 500*l.*, that I have returned my income at that sum.

25. This being one of the days for varnishing and touching the pictures at the Royal Academy, I went to town and touched on my picture of The Refusal; glazed over the flesh and whites, and painted the bodice of the girl blue. Then to see Haydon's picture at the Spring Gardens Exhibition: it looked exceedingly well, and seemed to make a most decided impression.

May 8. Went to breakfast with General Gordon, and agreed to paint for him the subject of a boy introduced into the Military Asylum at Chelsea, and an old soldier making out his claim for admission as a pensioner in the Hospital.

18. To Lord Stafford's Gallery, where I saw Sir George Beaumont and Mr. Reynolds, and was introduced to Mr. Kean. Mr. Reynolds requested me to undertake to paint portraits of Mr. Kean in his different characters, which I declined.

23. At Sir Simon Clark's, at Oak Hill, where I was particularly struck with an Ostade.

The Refusal was then engaged by Lord Charles Townshend, but left in the artist's hands, by which it gained one half of its minute and admirable finish. It is now in the collection of J. Sheepshanks, Esq.

CHAPTER XI.

JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO PARIS.

HAVING sent The Letter of Introduction and The Refusal to the Exhibition at the Royal Academy, Wilkie now turned his steps towards France, with whose people and pictures he desired to become acquainted. The storm of the Revolution had cleared and purified the air both of court and country. Napoleon and his Marshals took the places once occupied by Madonnas and Saints, and David and his disciples became the recording angels of the French Revolution.

The French painters had produced, before Wilkie's visit, works both of dignity and sentiment. His own opinions, formed on the spot, and noted at the time, will be found in the following Journal, and also in the letters to his brother and sister. He was accompanied by Haydon.

May 25th, 1814.

Having obtained passports, Mr. B. R. Haydon and myself set out this morning from London, to make a tour to Paris, by the way of Dieppe and Rouen. On arriving at Brighton, in the evening, we met Mr. Sewell, who told us that a packet was to sail immediately; in which he was to go himself. We got

our trunks passed at the Custom House, and before 9 o'clock were under weigh in the cutter; which landed us at Dieppe next day at 3 o'clock.

27th.

We were very much struck with the appearance of Dieppe and the people there, particularly the women. Their dresses exceeded any thing that we could have conceived: their muslin caps were large beyond description, and the other parts of their dress rather formal than graceful, with a great deal of printed and embroidered ornament. The disproportion of the men to the women in point of numbers appeared in this place very great indeed. The women seem very industrious; and odd as their dresses are, they were very clean. The apartments and shops are all very large, and in every shop-door and in every window we could see all the family, male and female, at work, principally in making the articles they sell. The dresses of the women have the greatest variety of colours, and are in this respect very picturesque. The apartments within, and the spaciousness of the houses without, present at every view complete compositions for pictures.

28th.

Left Dieppe at 6 o'clock in a cabriolet, and arrived at Rouen about half-past 2. Observed the whole of the country cultivated, though the state of agriculture does not seem to be so far advanced as to require the fields to be enclosed. Some part of the country, however, through which we passed appeared

the richest that I ever saw; and on the whole of the road we found fruit trees growing at each side in such quantities, that the greatest depredations by the passenger would never be observed. We passed several manufactories of cotton in the rich valleys before coming to Rouen, and were very much struck with the splendour of the buildings where they were carried on. The Boulevards, through which we passed as we entered Rouen, were the most beautiful rows of trees I ever saw. The town itself looked beautiful till we entered it; but here, although the houses were lofty and richly ornamented, the streets were so narrow and so dirty, that the effect of them was entirely lost.

Went to the theatre in the evening; saw a play, and an after-piece, the latter being the same as Colman's "Love laughs at Locksmiths;" we could understand tolerably well. We had, since arriving in France, observed but few well-dressed people in the streets, but at the theatre were surprised to find many very handsomely dressed. The acting, considered as a representation of the French character, we could not but consider as extremely natural, and much less extravagant than that generally seen on the English stage.

29th.

Observed the climate considerably milder than in London, the air and the water very soft, and although the doors and windows are frequently open, and never shut close, there are none of those disagreeable drafts which annoy us so much in England.

Went to the Cathedral at Rouen, where we heard grand mass. We were particularly struck with the richness and grandeur of the edifice, and above all by the people assembled. The immense building was almost entirely filled with people earnestly engaged with their devotions. Their dresses, in shape and colour, were varied beyond description, and, to our eyes, were so far removed from commonness and vulgarity, as to show a kind of delightful accordance with the building and the religion in which they were engaged. This was altogether to us a scene that I shall never forget, and which I think no person could see without being inspired with veneration for the Roman Catholic religion.

After coming out of the Cathedral, we went to see a Museum of Pictures which belonged to the place: the number of pictures was considerable, and of all sizes, but the greater part copies, and these but indifferent ones. We saw numbers of the inhabitants of the place looking at them; but from what we could observe from them, and from the people who conducted us, there is not much taste for fine pictures in this town. The best pictures were generally placed in very bad situations, and the indifferent ones seemed the most admired, and were placed in the best. What we admired the most was a copy from Raphael, of The Virgin and Christ, of which the head of the Virgin was beautiful. A picture by Giorgione struck us for its colour, but it was so high in the room that we could not examine it; the only other pictures that pleased us particularly were some early pictures like Albert Durer, but they were all in bad lights.

We amused ourselves in sauntering about the town, and in our walk entered a very beautiful church, lately built, near an hospital. We found a number of women and boys assembled near the confessional chairs, and where we discovered they were confessing to the priests one after the other. We stopped in the church a considerable time, as we were greatly impressed with the solemnity of the scene that was passing before us. The awe that this produced upon us was, however, considerably removed by seeing a number of young men playing at some game, like cricket, immediately before the church. Towards dusk we found the streets crowded with people very gaily dressed, the shops all open, and numbers of raree-shows, as jugglers, in the streets to attract attention, which, although Sunday evening, they seemed very successful in exciting among the people.

30th.

Left Rouen at 7 o'clock, had a very fine view from the hill of St. Catherine of the town and neighbourhood. Dined at a small village, named Aqui, where we saw a very fine country church. We travelled on in our voiture as far as Magny, a pretty little town, where we stopt for the night. The country we passed through to-day was not so full of population as some other districts we had seen, but seemed to be a very rich corn country: the grains we observed were principally rye and wheat. We overtook some French sailors, who were returning to their homes from Portsmouth, where they had been confined since the battle of Trafalgar (nine years).

31st.

Left Magny at 5 o'clock, and soon entered a vine country. Breakfasted at Pontoise — passed through St. Denis; passed over the field of battle between that and Mont Martre, where we saw the Russian lines, and arrived at Paris at half-past 2 o'clock. Our postilion drove us to the Hôtel Villedot, where we hired beds for the night, and after dining at a traiteur, we sallied forth to see the town. We went to the Thuilleries, were greatly delighted with the gardens, saw the Place Vendôme, went over the river, and walked about through a great number of streets, after which we went into the Palais Royal, which in gaiety and magnificence exceeded all that I had ever seen before. Heard this evening that the peace had been signed between the Allies and France. Observed that the streets were much more crowded in the evenings than they would have been in London, and that the spectacles to attract attention were very numerous. As we found our hotel a very expensive place to live at, we resolved not to stop longer than one night. We had, however, incautiously given our passports to the people of the house, who, in order to draw us in for another night, neglected to take them to the officer of police till the time we had bargained for was expired; being very much dissatisfied with this kind of trick, but obliged to submit to the imposition, we left the house immediately, and took a lodging in the Rue St. Benoit, which, though small, was the most comfortable place we had seen.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, Paris, 31st May, 1814.

The date of this letter will show you that we have succeeded in accomplishing our journey to the capital of France. At Brighton we embarked on board the packet, and although I experienced a good deal of uneasiness from sea-sickness, by the time we landed at Dieppe I was completely recovered. This being our first entrance into a foreign country, we were greatly struck with every thing we saw. You cannot imagine the amazing difference between the manners, dresses, and the habitations of the people here, and those we had so lately quitted in England. It is needless for me to attempt a description of them, but I can assure you, that the novelty of the whole has delighted me beyond any thing I have before seen.

We met a young gentleman at Brighton with whom we had some acquaintance; and as he seemed to be travelling with the same views, we have made him one of our party. At Dieppe we hired a cabriolet, as we were in no hurry to get to Paris, and have therefore taken sufficient time to see every thing that is worth seeing on the road. I do not know that I ever made a journey that has given me more satisfaction, or from which I have derived more new ideas.

The inns are the most curious places we have ever seen; and as we take every opportunity we can of speaking to innkeepers and their servants, our attempts at French have amused ourselves and them so much, that our journey has been a perpetual roar of laugh-

ter. In short, we have appeared to be three such merry fellows, even to them, that they have told us they will never forget us. The climate of this country is so delightful that it is impossible not to feel in good spirits; and in addition to this, the wines are so light and exhilarating, that it seems to make it quite a paradise. We are known by the very look to be Englishmen by every body; but we find the character of *Mi lord Anglais* not very easily supported; and although we have lived at a much cheaper rate than we could have done in England, we really believe that some advantages have been taken of our desire to do credit to old England. The dresses of the French ladies are very beautiful, and very unlike the English. Their head-dresses are rich and tasty beyond any thing I have seen. You can have no notion of the beauty of the lace they wear. Both Haydon and I wish that we could bring over some specimen of their caps and tippets to show you all how they are decorated.

We attended high mass in the Cathedral at Rouen, where we saw such a display of elegance as quite astonished us.

We arrived at Paris at three o'clock to-day, and have seen numbers of Russians, Austrian and other foreign troops here; but every thing seems so quiet, that no one would suppose any thing extraordinary had happened.

The expense of living and travelling is not so great as has been represented in London, and though we have not taken the cheapest modes of either, our journey has not cost us much. We preferred travelling in the cabriolet to the diligence, in order that we

might see the country, and our expenses have been considerably increased on that account. My passage across to Dieppe was a guinea and a half, and my living there, which has been less than at any other place, cost me for dinner, tea, bed, and breakfast, 9*s.* 6*d.* We have been walking through the principal streets, and have seen a number of the great buildings, which are very fine. We are now at the Hôtel Villedot, near the Palais Royal, but as we are to get into some lodging immediately, you need not direct here. Mr. Haydon will write to his sister to-morrow, and will mention where our lodging is.

D. W.

Since writing the above, which my ignorance of the custom prevented me sending off to-day, we have taken a very comfortable lodging, and have moved from our hotel. I therefore beg you will write to me immediately and let me know what you have been doing, and how you all get on at Kensington.

D. Wilkie,
M. Lenoble, Rue St. Benoit, No. 6.
Fauxbourg St. Germain, à Paris.

June 1st.

Went with Haydon and Mr. Sewell to see the Louvre; entered first the lower gallery, where the antique statues are placed, with which, and with the manner in which they were arranged, I was very much struck. The most striking of all was the Apollo, which, in addition to its excellence, had a fine

situation and a very perfect state of preservation to recommend it. The Venus de Medicis, the Laocoon, and the Torso also looked very well, and there was a great number of others of the first rank in sculpture. After examining the whole slightly, I went up stairs to the long gallery; the first picture that struck me was the large picture of Paul Veronese, of the Marriage of Cana, which, in those excellencies which address themselves to the eye, exceeded all that I saw. On entering the long gallery, the first school that presented itself was the French, but this did not come up to what I expected in such a place, as it did not even equal those of this school we have in our own country. There were not above six Claudes, and these, except one, of an inferior quality. The Nicholas and Gaspar Poussins were also inferior to those I had seen in London, and there is scarcely any other master who is able to support the credit of the school. The German school seems very rich in those of Rubens and Vandyke. Rembrandt did not look so favourably; and even in that in which he excels, colouring, and light, and shadow, his pictures did not appear to such advantage as I expected. Of Ostade there were some very fine specimens, but perhaps not so fine as some of Lord Stafford's. The pictures of Teniers looked altogether better than the Ostades, but this was more from the style in which they were painted, than from their being better pictures. Those of Metzu looked very fine both in the execution and effect.

2d.

Went with Haydon to call on Mr. Colnaghi, jun., whom we found, and had an account from him of the state of Paris during the entrance of the Russians. Called at the house of Messrs. Perigeaux; saw Mons. Claremont, to whom I presented my letter of credit. Went to the Louvre, where we remained till 3 o'clock; and after dining, went as far as the Luxembourg Palace. We were greatly pleased with the gardens of the Luxembourg, which are much finer than those of Vauxhall. Saw close by the gardens a sort of spectacle, at the door of which a crowd was assembled, and apparently much entertained with a dialogue between two people, a man and a woman, elevated upon a booth. I did not understand the points that occasioned the merriment; but from the gravity with which the whole was delivered, I was led to suppose that it was either pointed wit, or a dry sort of humour.

3d.

Found myself so much fatigued with the walking I had had for the last three days, that I was unable to go out, except to the restaurateur's. Met there an Englishman, who seemed much out of sorts from his not knowing any thing of French. I employed myself the greater part of the day in attempting to speak French to the mistress of the house. Finding that I had not yet recovered from my fatigue, I sent for *un médicin*, who prescribed for me a bottle of lemonade, mixed with some

drug of course, which, whether effective or not, had at least the advantage of being very well tasted.

4th.

Remained at home the whole of the day, though I found myself considerably better.

6th.

Went to the Palais de Luxembourg to see the gallery of Rubens; on entering, I was not at first struck with the look of the pictures, but after comparing them with what I had seen before, they grew upon me amazingly, and before I left the room, I could not help being convinced that, with all his faults, Rubens is one of the greatest painters that ever existed. Some of the pictures appeared a little rubbed in parts, but most of them are in an excellent state of preservation. The Embarkation of Mary de Medicis is excellent, and the portraits of herself and the ladies accompanying her, as fine as could be conceived. The sea-nymphs at the bottom of the picture, with the water dashing upon them, is painted in Rubens' finest manner. The picture representing the birth of Louis XIII. is excellent. That of Henry IV. taking his leave is also very good, and particularly the little Dauphin, who is beautifully painted. But one of the finest is that of the Coronation of Mary de Medicis; this, compared with some others, is a cold picture, but painted with such a relish for harmony as never was surpassed. This is one of the finest pictures I ever saw by Rubens. The Exchange of the Two Princesses of France and Spain, was one of the richest in point of

colour, and in the most perfect state of preservation. The Interview of Mary de Medicis and her Son is painted in a very grand tone of colour; the monster at the bottom of the picture excellent. The concluding picture of Time discovering Truth, is also in a very fine style of painting.

7th.

Went to the convent of Les Petits Augustins, to see the ancient monuments of France: found here specimens of the French sculpture from the 13th century down to the present time. This sight was particularly interesting, inasmuch as it presented a greater number of the monuments of great men than can be seen at any other place; but it had the look of a museum, although some of the tombs really contained the ashes of the people they were intended to commemorate; it certainly had not the look of a burial place. This, however, is a very fine way of preserving them, and they derive very great effect from the order in which they are arranged, and from the decorations with which they are accompanied of old stained glass windows, &c. Perhaps the most interesting of all the monuments is that of Abelard and Eloise, and this, in point of picturesque effect, is very beautifully placed in a garden, surrounded with trees, so disposed as to form a very pleasing back-ground. The monument of Henry IV. represents him extended on a bed, as was usual in those times. The sculpture is formal, but, as an imitation of nature, in very just taste. There are some other pieces of sculpture, that show a very true feeling for the representation of nature, which,

had it been improved upon by later artists, might have risen to something very fine.

TO THOMAS WILKIE, ESQ.

My dear Brother, Rue St. Bénoit, Paris, 7th June, 1814.

The day after I sent you a short letter from Brighton I reached the French coast, and such a transition I never before experienced. The difference between every thing I saw here, compared with what I had left on the other side, seemed as great as if one had been dropt in the moon. The quays were filled with crowds of women, and, although we have not observed in other parts of the country such want of men, compared with the women, as has been reported, I must acknowledge that here the superabundance of the fair sex was immense. The dresses of the women at Dieppe, though picturesque beyond every thing, gave me, from their absurd appearance, a very strange idea of the French people. I found, however, that they were in this, as in their buildings and every thing else, much more antiquated than the people of Paris, and, compared with the people of England, nearly two centuries behind. Their houses, in point of size, are magnificent, but seem as if they had not undergone any repair for a hundred years. The hotel we lodged in was like a house for a nobleman, the apartments were very large, and the walls were covered with tapestry. The furniture had an old-fashioned costliness about it, but was so intermixed with the effects of tear and wear that every idea of comfort was removed. I was greatly

interested in walking through the town by the look of the shops. It appeared as if every shopkeeper sold only the articles that he manufactured himself, and he and all his family were generally found in the exercise of their trade, either within the shop or seated at the door. They seemed to know nothing of the division of labour in their manufactures, and in their agriculture they are so far behind that they have not a single field enclosed. However, by their industry in one, and by the help of a fine climate in the other, they enjoy a greater number of the good things of this life than the people of the same rank in our own country.

Rouen is a noble city, and has still some very fine monuments of its former greatness. The boulevards at its entrance are magnificent, and the churches, some of which were built by the English, are as fine as any thing of the kind I have seen. As we stopt all the Sunday at Rouen, we went to see the service of High Mass. I was particularly struck at seeing, for the first time, a Roman Catholic cathedral applied to the purposes for which it was built. The cathedral, which is nearly as large as St. Paul's, was not only filled from one end to the other, but every aisle had numbers of people in it, and every shrine had its votaries. We found, on coming out of the cathedral, several decent-looking people very ready to accompany us to show us the wonders of the place. They took us to see a gallery of pictures belonging to the town, and also to see the courts of justice and the prisons. The place where Joan of Arc was burnt we had pointed out to us by these people; but there were

some other objects of curiosity to us, which they would not have shown us as wonders, if they had shown them at all. One of this description we found for ourselves. When we were walking out we went accidentally into a very beautiful church, and were surprised to find numbers of young people collected about the confessional chairs, and going, one by one, to the lattice at the side to confess to the priest. I stopt a considerable time in the church to see this going on, and was struck with it as one of the most strange things I had seen since my arrival in France.

From Rouen to Paris we travelled through one of the richest corn countries I ever saw; but the villages we passed through, immediately before we entered Paris, were by no means equal to those around London. We saw none of those little cottages and country-houses that ornament the approaches to London; and, although the land is fertile to a very great degree, the corn-fields lie entirely open, and not an enclosure is to be seen. After passing through the town of St. Denis, the nearest town to Paris, we came at once upon the field of battle between St. Denis and Montmartre. The first object that presented itself here was the Russian lines; and, as we passed over the plain, our postilion pointed out to us numbers of trees that had been cut through by the cannon-shot, and some large mounds of earth which he said had been made for the burial of the dead. On the heights of Montmartre we could make out the lines where the French cannon had been placed, and this was all we could observe of the remains of the battle. There was, I should add, a de-

serted look about the whole place, but this was, perhaps, more from association than any thing else, for the whole was already covered with corn.

It was not till we had got into the heart of Paris that we began to discover its splendour. We lodged for the first night at an hotel near the Palais Royal, where we found the reports of the expense of living at Paris in a great measure realized. Since that, however, we have got a very comfortable lodging in the fauxbourg St. Germain, and have been very constantly employed in going about to see the wonders of the place, most of which are very far superior to any thing of the same sort we have got to show in London.

D. W.

8th.

On going to the Louvre, I began making a study of the Virgin's head, in the small picture by Raphael of the Virgin and Child. I soon found that the number of people passing behind me, and looking over my shoulder, became an interruption, and I accordingly gave over before I had completed the study. Went to dine with Saywell at a restaurateur's, and from thence to a coffee-house in the Palais-Royal, where we found an English newspaper, which gave an account of the preparations for receiving the foreign sovereigns, and also stated that some Cossacks had arrived in London.

9th.

Went to-day to take a view of the city of Paris from the heights of Montmartre; ascended first to a

windmill, from whence we saw both the town and the field of battle. I made a slight sketch of both. We dined in a little public-house in the town on the top of the hill. We went into the church of Montmartre, which was shown to us by an old woman, who pointed out to us also numbers of relics in glass cases by the side of the altar. On the top of the spire of the church is a telegraph. Went up to it, and the soldier who had the charge of it was very civil in pointing every thing out to us, in the field of battle, which he saw himself from this spot when the action was going on. Went in the evening to the Théâtre Français, where we saw a new piece, seemingly got up for the time, "Les Etats de Blois." It was very well acted, so far as we could understand. The afterpiece we liked much better; it was a comic piece, and much more intelligible than the others to our ears.

10th.

Went to the Louvre, and began to draw a kneeling Venus in the sculpture gallery, but found considerable difficulty in proceeding without a seat. Went and took a walk afterwards through the Palais Royal, and from thence to Messrs. Peregeaux, where I drew 20*l.* more of my letter of credit. In the evening to the Opéra Français; was much disappointed with the opera, but pleased with the ballet (Antoine et Cléopatre), which was pretty well managed.

11th.

Found that Mons. Théodore Brunet had called when I was out, and left his card. I went to find

him as soon as I could, and on entering the house was introduced to his mother, Madame Brunet, who sent for her son. I was a good deal pleased with the manner of Mons. Théodore, and with the reception I met from him. He accompanied me to the Louvre, and went over all the Gallery with me. I met to-day Mr. Swinburne. While I was looking over the antique statues with M. Brunet, we were accosted by a young French artist, who, after inquiring a good deal about art in England, proposed showing me the Life Academy in Paris. He mentioned the time when I should meet him in the evening. I accordingly went, accompanied by Haydon, between the hours of 5 and 7, to the Palais des Beaux Arts, and with some difficulty found out the Académie Vivante. This was in a small, disagreeable looking apartment, to which we entered through a still more disagreeable looking hall or ante-chamber, where an old woman was stationed to take charge of hats, great coats, portfolios, &c. The Academy-room, which was not very large, was filled with students of all ages, and seemingly in all conditions of life. The figure they were studying from was an old man, and of a much worse character in point of form than any I ever saw in our Academy in London. They never have any females in their Life Academy; and if they had, the Academy would require to be conducted in a very different way, for it would seem to be open to every body. It was Mons. Gérard's month to act as visiter; but he was not there, nor could I see any one in his place, either to preserve order or instruct the student.

12th.

Found great preparations making for the celebration of the Fête de Dieu, which takes place this day. The people had carpets, tapestries, and linens, hanging on the walls of their houses, and in many places there were altars erected in the streets, which were ornamented in various ways with carpets, silks, and large green shrubs growing in boxes. Louis XVIII. had ordered that the Sundays and fête days should be kept in the same way as before the Revolution, by keeping all the shops shut; and the observance of this order was to begin to-day. It occurred to me, as I found it did to many other people, that such an alteration was very impolitic in the king, and that it would not be attended to; but the event has shown that his majesty has acted wisely. It seemed to be acquiesced in by every body with pleasure, and very different from the preceding Sunday. Almost every shop was shut, and the solemnity of the day has been observed almost as much as in London. I went with Haydon to the Tuilleries, and obtained admittance to the Salle de Maréchaux, in order that we might see the king as he passed through to the chapel. After waiting a considerable time amidst the crowd, we at last saw the king, and his appearance was very prepossessing; he looked a simple good honest man, with a good healthy colour in his face. We saw also the Duke and Duchess D'Angoulême. From the Tuilleries I went to call on the Marquis de Crénolle, to leave him my address for his son the Comte, when he arrives in Paris. My reception from the Marquis was, however, not very

gratifying: I found him the least polite of any Frenchman I have yet met with. After dinner I went with Haydon to deliver some of Mr. Raimbach's prints to Mons. Bervie; did not find him at home, but left the prints.

13th.

This morning we went to see the pictures of Mons. Gérard. We saw the portraits of the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, Louis XVIII., and a number of the distinguished characters; amongst whom was Bonaparte, and the Empress Josephine, and Maria Louisa. This collection was particularly interesting from the characters it contained, and not a little so from the specimen it presented of the French style of portrait painting. There seemed to be great correctness in the drawing of the heads, but no attempt at any thing beyond mere imitation. The execution was in general very tame, and the colouring bad both in point of quality and arrangement. Mons. Gérard has a very fine show-room; and while we were there numbers of well-dressed people came in to see the pictures. Madame Gérard was in the room the greater part of the time, and was very obliging in explaining to us what we wanted to know of the pictures. From Mons. Gérard's we went to see the pictures of M. David. After some difficulty we found his painting room in the Sorbonne, which was neither more nor less than an old church. We saw the picture of Bonaparte declared Emperor, and of the coronation of Josephine; both of which were painted on a very large scale, and full of portraits. Of the

two, the Coronation was the best; but even this was nothing more than an imitation of Rubens' Coronation of Mary de Medicis. There was another picture of M. David's that I was inclined to examine, from what I had heard of it before, and this was the Sabine Women separating the Combatants before the Walls of Rome. Some parts of this picture, particularly the hands, and some parts of the figures and the horses, were well drawn; but the composition seemed confused, and without an object to arrest the attention, while the story, whether well adapted for a picture or not, lost its interest entirely from its not being well told. There was only one figure I thought well conceived, and that was a female elevating herself with her child upon a fragment of architecture to arrest the attention of the warriors. The whole of David's pictures, however, seemed badly coloured; and, indeed, whatever their merit may consist in, I have not been able to discover in any of the French artists the slightest relish for this fascinating quality. In the absence of this, too, I do not see that they have many of those requisites that have been found necessary to the reputation of other great artists. Their compositions are without taste, their expressions often without dignity, and theatrical; and if any one were to except their power of drawing the figures, I do not know what would be left to recommend them. This last accomplishment, however, it must be confessed, they possess in a very considerable degree: and though their figures are stiff, and without motion, they are frequently true to nature, and always distinct and well understood.

TO MISS WILKIE.

Paris, Rue St. Bénoit, No. 6.
13th June, 1814.

My dear Sister,

My time, since I have been in this place, has been occupied solely in going about to see the shows, the spectacles, and the pictures, so that I have not been able, as you will readily imagine, to do much in the way of study. A principal difficulty with me when I first landed in France, was the want of knowing sufficiently the language to be able to converse with the people; when I got to Paris, however, it was necessary that I should sally forth by myself in quest of adventure. I used frequently, at first, to ask the way to a place that I knew, to see if I understood their answer. I used, also, to buy some trifle for the sake of getting into conversation; but what I have derived the greatest advantage from is, that of talking to the people of the house we live in. This I found needed only a beginning, for such is the good temper and politeness of the French people, that they are always willing to listen to you, and to understand what you say. Our hostess is particularly obliging in this respect; she is at all times willing to talk, and so far willing to be understood, that she will repeat what she says over again, till I can fully understand her. I am often surprised at what I can learn in this way, as well as at the quantity of information I can give her when I begin to talk about my own country, or about any show I have been to see in Paris.

Since the commencement of the Revolution the Sunday has never been observed in France; the

shops have always been open, and work carried on the same as on any other day. The first Sunday after our arrival in Paris we found this practice still in force, but the King issued an order last week that all the shops should be shut on that day, and no work should be carried on under a very heavy penalty. The Sunday that followed this order was a grand fête day, but I think I have seldom seen a Sunday more strictly observed in London than it was here, and although I at first thought it an imprudent order of His Majesty, it seems to have been most cheerfully acquiesced in by the people. A decent looking person told us, that it was the only Sunday that had given him any pleasure for these twenty years.

Haydon and I went in the morning to the Tuilleries to try to see the King. At first the guards would not admit us, but when we said, *Nous sommes Anglais*, they allowed us to go up stairs at once. We waited a considerable time in a hall, and at last saw the King pass through to the chapel attended by the Duke and Duchess D'Angoulême. The countenance of the King I thought very prepossessing. He seemed a jolly good-natured looking man, with a becoming face, and was very well received by the people.

The houses are all built with common stairs here as in Edinburgh, and the dress of the ladies is really very good. They are all covered with lace and frill; their wastes are up to their shoulders, and their dresses not at all adapted to show their shapes, which are perhaps not so much worth showing as those of

the English ladies. The bonnets and caps they wear are the most prodigious things I ever saw. They are, indeed, so much beyond what you see in England, that any sketch of them will look like a caricature. Their hair is tied all of it upon the crown of the head in the Chinese fashion. Such is the difference in the dress of the English and French, that you can distinguish the country at once, when you see them in the street. The English ladies I have seen here look very simple and interesting, but the French ladies tell me that, although they are handsome, their dress is frightful. I was exceedingly mortified on asking our hostess, when I first came, if ever she had heard of l'Ecosse, or of Scotland, to find that she did not know that there was any such place or people in existence.

D. W.

14th.

Went this morning to see the Jardin des Plantes. Saw a great number of living animals, lions, tigers, &c. I was particularly struck with the lions; they were great beyond every thing : one of them had got a dog as a companion, which I suppose he was greatly attached to. I was taken into a place where there is a collection of the skeletons of all sorts of animals, and various other anatomical preparations, with which I was greatly interested. The collection of objects I saw in the garden, both animal and vegetable, seemed very wonderful; but as I had an appointment, I came away without seeing the finest part of it, which I understand is in the Cabinet d'Histoire Naturelle.

Having an engagement to dine with Mons. Brunet, I came home, where I found a letter from my sister, which relieved me from considerable uneasiness, and gave me a good account of what was going on at home. Went at 5 o'clock to Mons. Brunet's to dinner, where I met his mother Madame B., and another gentleman. The dinner was very different from an English dinner; but upon the whole many things were very good, and particularly the wine. Immediately after dinner, the coffee came in, and each drank a cup very hot with *eau-de-vie*, instead of milk. After this we sat some time in the drawing-room, and then went out, according to custom, to the promenade in the gardens of the Thuilleries, which was crowded beyond every thing by people like ourselves taking their evening walks. After enjoying this for some time, I took my leave of my party, and came home.

15th.

Mr. Théod. Brunet called to-day at 11 o'clock, by appointment, and was so obliging as to accompany me to the printsellers, to try to get some one to engage as an agent to dispose of my print from The Village Politicians. We went first to a Mons. Bensi, to whom Mons. Brunet was recommended. Mons. Bensi himself was in London, but his wife, and a young person who was in the shop, seemed very willing to engage as agents, and demanded the terms, which I told them, for the proofs was sixty francs, and the prints thirty francs, to the trade; with the view that they might be sold, the one for eighty, the other for

forty francs, to the public. All this they thought quite reasonable, and I believe they would have been very willing to engage to take a number; but when I told them that I could not take any other payment than ready money, they told me this was, in the present state of affairs, impossible. They said they were only publishers, and their connections lay all over the Continent, and that they did not sell many prints in Paris, and that they could not make any other payment than by bills at nine months' date. As we could not agree, they were so obliging as to give me the address of some other printsellers, whose line of business it was more likely to answer. I accordingly went to two on the Boulevards, one of whom declined taking any as he had just sent to London for the newest prints, and was not sure but this would be amongst them; and the other, though fully persuaded of the merit of the print, and though previously acquainted with its reputation, declined having any, as he did not think it historical enough for the Parisian market. The last we went to was a Mons. Roland, in the Place des Victoires. He received us very politely, but told us that the times were so bad that he could not have any thing to do with the print. He had been printseller to the Emperor, and was now trying to get made printseller to the King, but had not yet succeeded: he told us that printselling was at present at the lowest ebb in Paris, and that, for himself, he was just about to send a considerable collection of pictures to London, to try how they would sell there. He could not venture upon the purchase of any of the prints. Finding that I had been so far unsuccessful

with the leading printsellers, I determined on giving up the search for customers for the present, and accordingly took leave of M. Théod. Brunet when we left Mons. Roland's.

16th.

Went at 10 o'clock to the Tuilleries. We were admitted to the chapel, where the King was expected, and at 12 o'clock his Majesty entered with the Duchess D'Angoulême. Had a very good view of both, and saw a person who was pointed out as Mons. Talleyrand. Went to the Barrière du Roule, where we were shown various models of the principal cities in Europe. Returned and went by myself to a small theatre, where the figures acted entirely by machinery. This I found very amusing, and was surprised at the exactness with which the motions of men and animals were given.

17th.

This morning we set off from the Tuilleries in a cabriolet, through a very beautiful country, to Versailles. The road passed by the left of St. Cloud, which we saw rising very beautifully among the high trees of the palace. We crossed the Seine, passed through the town of Sevres, a place remarkable for its manufactory of china, and got to Versailles early in the day. We stopt at an inn where we engaged beds, and immediately sallied forth to see the gardens and palaces of this celebrated place. Our conductor took us first to Grand Trianon, a place that had been frequently the residence of Bonaparte. This house has

but one suite of apartments, as they are all on the ground floor. We found a number of pictures here, among which there was one, a very fine one, by Nicholas Poussin. On leaving this place we were conducted to another house called Petit Trianon. In this house we found nothing very remarkable, but were conducted to a little theatre close by, which was the most beautiful thing of the kind I ever saw. This had been frequently used by Bonaparte and his suite as a place of amusement, and is at present in the most perfect order for any dramatic representation. By this house of Petit Trianon is a garden, which was fitted up in the English style, by Marie Antoinette, and has, in consequence, a variety and a beauty that it is in vain to look for in a French garden. The trees were allowed to take their natural shapes, the pieces of water followed the sweeps and turns of the ground in which they lay, and the little walks were perpetually discovering to you some new prospect, or losing themselves behind the rocks or the trees. In following one of them we were led to some houses, built like cottages, by the side of a little lake. The exterior of these houses was not much finer than might be seen in any country village, but, when we entered them, the splendour of the furniture was surprising. We were told that they were used as lodging-houses by the guests at Petit Trianon. On our way, returning to the house, we passed a very beautiful temple of Venus, built and decorated in a very rich style. These gardens of Petit Trianon have, in some parts, an artificial look, which, considering that it is entirely a work of art, it was impos-

sible to avoid. The imitation of the English style of gardening, however, is very perfect; and, small as this garden is, it has more variety and more of the beauties of nature in it than all the gardens of Versailles put together. The house of Petit Trianon had been let out to a traiteur during the time of the Revolution, and had received considerable damage from the parties that used to frequent the house and gardens. But this seemed now to be entirely repaired, and in such a state as might convert even an admirer of Versailles to a taste for English gardening.

In the afternoon we were conducted through the Chateau at Versailles. Saw the theatre, which was built to answer the purposes of an Opera House and Ball Room, and for the richness with which it was fitted up, in the architectural part, it far exceeded anything I ever saw before. It is a very large house, almost the whole of the pillars are gilded, and the large interstices had been formerly filled with mirrors of immense value. The next place that attracted our attention was the Chapel, and this was really magnificent. The whole inside was built with different kinds of marble, and decorated in the richest way possible. We were then led through a long suite of apartments, which had once been fitted up in the richest style, but which, though still magnificent, were now hastening to decay. The ceilings, which were painted by Le Brun, and other celebrated artists, were now so tarnished in many parts, that it would be very difficult to recover them. The Grand Gallery, which is supposed to have been the finest room in Europe, still claims that pre-eminence, amidst

all the neglect it has experienced. The ceilings are certainly very respectable in point of art, but I have great doubts whether the art of painting is not degraded by being made use of to ornament the compartments of architecture. However well the spaces may be adapted to show off the designs of the artist, they must still appear in the rank of appendages, and however ornamental to the building, yet as a part of it they cannot but be considered as inferior to the work of the architect.

In the evening we found the doors of the theatre crowded with people anxious to get places to see the actors of the Théâtre Français, who had come out from Paris for the night. The play that was announced was Hamlet, so we joined the crowd, and with difficulty got in. We found this play very much altered from the original of Shakspeare, but so adapted as to produce a very striking effect upon a French audience. Talma played Hamlet, and in a scene which was nearly the same as the closet-scene, he acted as if he saw the ghost, but without any figure to represent that personage. In a scene afterwards, he brings in the ashes of his father in an urn, which he weeps over very much, and when his mother comes in, requests her to embrace it also. A very singular effect was produced by her going up to touch it, and shrinking back with horror. The play was very much altered both in the plot and the characters. Hamlet was a very different person from what Shakspeare had made him, and so was Ophelia; but, whether the alteration was an improvement or not, the

play seemed to produce a very striking effect upon the audience.

18th.

This day Haydon set off by himself to Rambouillet to see the castle at that place. I remained the whole of the day at Versailles, and employed myself in making a drawing of part of the town and castle. Haydon returned in the afternoon.

19th.

This day the Fête-de-Dieu was celebrated at Versailles, and we saw the procession from the windows of our hotel. It was very splendid, and consisted of the priests, a number of women, children, and soldiers. At 11 o'clock we set off in a cabriolet to return to Paris. We went first to the house of Malmaison. On the way we were informed that the house could not be seen without tickets, but that there was an English lady who had the charge of the house, to whom we might apply. We accord gly did apply, and were admitted to the Gallery, which had been the property of the Empress Josephine. There were several pictures in this gallery of the very first quality, particularly a Titian, which in point of preservation was the most perfect I ever saw of the master. We crossed the country by a very fine road to St. Cloud, which we found a very beautiful place, but we were unfortunately prevented seeing the gardens by the rain. We also found that the Palace could not be seen at present, as Monsieur was

residing there, and we were accordingly obliged to return to Paris without having our curiosity gratified.

20th.

Went this morning to see the catacombs at the Barrière d'Enfer. We waited a considerable time,—but were at last admitted. We were conducted by a guide, each of us having a candle, down a narrow staircase, and on coming to the bottom we were conducted through a number of passages cut out of the rock, till at last we came to the place where the bones are kept. This was a very singular sight. The walls seemed built with the bones of human bodies, and at certain distances there were layers of sculls, which were placed in rows with a sort of uniformity, and even neatness, that with any other material would have been pleasing. There are a vast quantity of bones in this place, but the catacombs had not the interest that I expected, and that arose principally from not having the means of knowing to whom the bones belonged. They appeared only an immense mass of the materiel of human existence, which had once formed part of the bodies, but which do not now characterise any quality of the minds to which they belonged. On returning from this we stopped at the Luxembourg Gallery, and remained there studying the works of Rubens till 4 o'clock. In the evening we went to the Opera Comique, where we were, upon the whole, pretty well amused.

21st.

From the Rue Mont-Blanc I went to the top of Bonaparte's Column in the Place Vendôme. I met here some Swedish gentlemen from Pomerania, one of whom I found very agreeable. I met also an Englishman, who had travelled over the greater part of Europe. Called on Mons. Brunet.

22d.

Went to the Louvre; studied particularly the pictures of the Flemish school, among which I was especially struck with those of Ostade and Terburg, the latter of whom has risen greatly in my estimation, from what I have seen here. He possessed a most perfect style of colouring, and represents his objects with a manner of handling the most beautiful and the least artificial of any I ever saw. I observed to-day that a number of pictures, which did not strike at first, began to gain upon me exceedingly. The Ostades and the Rembrandts improve greatly—the Teniersses, and others in that style, rather lose. The picture of the Marriage at Cana, which struck me so much at first, now begins to look common, and does not bear to be dwelt upon like the other pictures painted with more care and thinking. Dined, and went to the Palais Royal to see a model in relief of Switzerland; which amused me a good deal. Wrote this evening a letter to my brother Thomas, mentioning when I thought of being home.

23d.

Went with M. Brunet and Mr. Haydon to call on

M. Bervie. Found him at home in his room. He told us that he had been to call upon us, but could not find out our lodging. He proposed, however, to call again. He showed us various of his works, which I think in a very fine style of engraving. I was surprised to find that the print of Louis XVI. was engraved by M. Bervie. He told us that he had cut the plate in two at the time of the Revolution, for fear of its being laid hold of by the people in power as a pretext for doing him an injury. I went with M. Brunet to the Palais des Beaux Arts, and the School of Architecture. Saw their collection of models of Grecian and Roman buildings, which were very beautiful. Called on a printseller of the name of Delpech, on the Quai Voltaire, whom I requested to call upon me to-morrow at 10 o'clock to see the print of The Village Politicians. Went to the Théâtre Français, where we saw Hamlet adapted to the French taste, as I had seen it before at Versailles. There was nothing in it that struck me as new, except a passage alluding to Angleterre, which, from the shouts and acclamations of the audience, I suppose conveyed some reflection on our country. At the conclusion of the play there was a great noise made in approbation of Talma's acting of the character of Hamlet. The curtain again drew up, and Talma came forward to pay his respects for the applause of the audience.

24th.

Went this morning to the Bibliothèque, where I found the appearance of a very fine library. I was struck with the number of the books, and with the propriety

with which the admission of the public seemed to be conducted. I went into a smaller room, which is filled with books of prints, but as all the places at the table were occupied, I had to wait some time before I could see any. I had time to look over a collection of Rembrandt's etchings before the doors were shut, which was at 2 o'clock. Went to M. Bonnemaison's, and was admitted to the gallery of Giustiniani, which was filled entirely with Italian pictures. Saw M. Bonnemaison, who was very attentive. Went with Haydon after dinner to call on a M. Wyburn, who took us to see M. Garion, the painter. We were struck with the largeness of his house. Saw some of his pictures, which in their way have talent, but it seems to be exerted in so different a way from what I have seen in the old school, or in my own country, that I do not know how to rank it. They seem to have the appearance of outlines filled up, and almost all the French pictures I have seen appear to want depth in the light and shadow.

25th.

Went to the Louvre, where I met Haydon, Saywell, and Richter, who accompanied me to M. Bonnemaison's house. We found M. B. at home by appointment, and were taken by him to the hotel of the Prince de Benevent, where we saw the most beautiful collection of Flemish pictures for the size I had ever beheld. There was a most beautiful Terburg, an Ostade, a Wouvermans, a Cuyp, a Vandervelde, and the best Jan Stein I had ever seen; the beautiful picture of the Signing of the Treaty of Munster

by Terburg I had formerly seen in London. The room these pictures were placed in is fitted up in the English style, and is remarkable for being the room in which the treaty of peace was signed on the 31st of May. There were also some other pictures in the Prince's collection of a very fine quality, but not so striking to my eye as those already mentioned. I went to dine with Saywell, at a restaurateur's, and afterwards met with Mr. Wyburn, who took us first to Sir Charles Stuart's to ask for our passports, then to the Palais Royal, where we visited every place in the building that was worth seeing. What struck me most were the gaming-tables, which were the first things of the kind I ever saw. There were various descriptions of them, and if we had stopt long enough we might have witnessed various turns of fortune. As it was, we saw a young man win about 150 Louis. We went to a place that had once been a theatre and is now a coffee-room. This is very beautiful; but what pleased us as much as anything was a very pretty sort of woman, who keeps a coffee-house fitted up in a very elegant style, but in which she herself is the principal ornament and attraction. I returned home after being very much amused by this evening's excursion.

26th.

M. Bervie called at 12 o'clock, and Mr. Wyburn at the same time. M. Bervie looked at The Village Politicians, and seemed pleased with it. When Haydon came in we went with Mr. Wyburn and M. Bervie to M. Gerard's, where we found a number of people

looking at the pictures. I was introduced to M. Gerard, who seemed a very good sort of little man. From M. Gerard's we went to M. Girodet's. We were very readily admitted, and found M. G. with several people of consequence with him. We received particular attention from M. Girodet, who showed us a number of very fine likenesses of Bonaparte, which he had made at various opportunities from the Emperor himself. Among other places, Mr. Wyburn took us to call on a lady of his acquaintance, whose name I forget. This lady had been an actress, and had the qualifications of singing, drawing, and engraving, besides that of acting, in very great perfection. We were received by her in her bedroom, and sat with her to look at her etchings for some time. Mr. Wyburn next took us to a place that had the name of Vauxhall, but which was very poor, both in the company and the entertainments, to our Vauxhall in London. The only thing I was struck with was a large rotunda, or gallery, which was very fine.

27th.

Went this morning to deliver a letter to the post-office for Mr. Raimbach. Called on Madame Brunet, and then went to the Louvre for a considerable time.

28th.

Went with Saywell to Sir Charles Stuart's, and after waiting for more than an hour, got our passports to return to England. Bought a shawl to take to England. Left Saywell and went to call on M. Gros, whose pictures I could not see because he was at work.

Called on M. Naigeon, whom I found at home and very attentive; he took me through the Gallery of the Luxembourg, where there were a number of artists hard at work studying from the pictures of Rubens. M. Naigeon asked me to come and breakfast with him on Thursday morning at 10 o'clock. I had a letter from my brother, in which he mentions that the governors of the British Institution have voted for Haydon's picture 100 guineas as a mark of approbation. Went with Haydon to see the Théâtre des Variétés, which we were not very much entertained with.

29th.

Went with M. Brunet to call on M. Bensi; saw only Madame Bensi, who, as her husband was in London, would not in his absence undertake any thing respecting the agency of the print. Went with M. Brunet to some other places, and then left him to return to meet Haydon. Went to call on M. de Launey, who received me with great politeness. I met here the old Marquis de Crénolle, whom I found a much more agreeable man than I had found him at first.

30th.

Breakfasted this morning with M. Naigeon. Found him strongly attached to the present system of French art; attempted to combat some of his opinions, but with very little success. M. N. showed me the apartments of the Palais de Senat, which I thought exceedingly rich. M. Naigeon accompanied me to our lodgings, where I showed him Mr. Raimbach's print.

He told me of a printseller, who, he thought, was a very respectable man, and accompanied me to his house; but, as I expected, this printseller would not have any thing to do with it. He thought it, as did the other people in the shop, well engraved and well composed, but not at all adapted to the refined taste of the Parisians. Haydon and I then took a fiacre to the Gobelins, which we saw after waiting two hours at the door. I thought the manner of working the tapestry very curious, and the imitation of the pictures often very successful, and even in some respects, particularly in colour, superior to the pictures they were copied from. We returned from this to the Palais Royal, where we met Mr. Wyburn, and then went with a party to Tivoli. Was exceedingly amused with this place, which, although inferior to our Vauxhall in style and magnificence, was superior to it in the variety of the amusements. Here we saw grimacing, rope-dancing, and fire-works in the greatest perfection. The party we accompanied was also particularly agreeable. One of the ladies, with whom I had a good deal of conversation, was the most artless and at the same time the most entertaining girl I ever met with. I this evening met Mr. Roberton, whom I had formerly known in London.

July 1st.

Called on Saywell, whom I found so ill that he could not go with me to London. Went with Haydon, and left my passport with a fee of ten francs. Came home. Met Mr. Wyburn, who went with us, first to see the great corn-market, and then to take a place in

the Diligence, on Sunday at 12, for Calais. Went to Brunet's, and from thence to Captain Black's to dinner, where Haydon and I met Roberton. Spent a pleasant evening with Captain Black. I came home, and had M. Brunet with me till late.

2d.

Went with Haydon to draw the remainder of the money I had in my letter of credit; then to purchase some music and to procure my passport. Went with Mr. Wyburn and Haydon to see the first picture of an artist, and afterwards the Hercules of a sculptor, which I thought very well.

As I had this morning taken to M. Delpech two prints and one proof of The Village Politicians, to put in his windows, he called this evening to give me a receipt for the prints. He told me that a number of people had been looking at the prints, and that some English people had told him of the picture of Blindman's Buff they had seen in London. Settled some bills, and packed up my portmanteau for travelling.

3rd.

M. Brunet called to breakfast. Called on Madame Solvine, who took me to see a work her husband had published at Mr. Vincent's, a painter of the old school. Saw the work, and saw the pictures of Mr. Vincent and his wife, who had been both painters of eminence in their day. Made this morning a present of a small reticule to Madame Lenoble for her attention. Got a fiacre, and was accompanied by Saywell to Nôtre Dame, where I met Messrs. Haydon, Roberton, and

Brunet. The diligence was ready to set off, and we were soon in motion. We had a very pleasant day's journey, and travelled all night.

4th.

Arrived at Amiens to breakfast. Went to the cathedral; saw that a number of the ornaments about it had been destroyed by the demagogues in the time of the Revolution. Was shown here a relic of the face of St. John the Baptist, in a glass case, which some of the people paid great reverence to. We travelled the whole day, and got to Montreuil at 9 o'clock at night. This town is very strongly fortified. The English officers that were with me said that they had not seen any place in France so strong, and only Badajos in Spain stronger. In the middle of the night we stopped at a town, where we were overtaken by a regiment of English cavalry going to embark at Boulogne. The effect of the troops passing and the trumpet sounding, with the beauty of the moonlight, was very imposing.

5th.

Arrived at Boulogne at 5 o'clock. This is a large town, but we had not time to see much of it. There were several English cavalry regiments ready to embark. We found in the diligence a lady who gave us a particular account of her sufferings in the Revolution. She had lost her husband and two children. We arrived at Calais early in the day, and after going through the form of getting our passports and trunks examined, we went on board, and arrived at Dover at 11 o'clock at night. The inn we went to at Dover,

after what we had seen of the accommodations in France, was a very comfortable place indeed. Next morning I went to the custom-house, to see my own trunk and the trunk of the French lady examined. We walked about afterwards to see the town and the fortifications on the hill. At 4 o'clock I got into the coach, travelled all night, and arrived at Kensington at 8 o'clock next morning. The country I passed through from Dover to London bore a very striking contrast to all that I had seen on the Continent; and whatever delight or satisfaction I have derived from my journey to Paris, it has not made me think the less of my own country.

CHAPTER XII.

"DISTRAINING FOR RENT."—CANOVA IN LONDON.—WILKIE IN HOLLAND—LETTERS TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, JOHN ANDERSON AND MR. RAIMBACH.—WILKIE IN SCOTLAND.—LETTER FROM SIR WALTER SCOTT.—WILKIE AT ABBOTSFORD.—"THE ABBOTSFORD FAMILY."—SCOTT'S DESCRIPTION OF WILKIE'S PICTURE.

WILKIE on his return declared that he was more astonished than instructed by his visit to Paris*: the manners were little to his liking, the works of art less, and he was not sufficiently acquainted with the language to enter heartily into the humours of the people. The journey was visible neither in the man nor his works: he acquired no new method of conceiving or of handling a subject, and the people with all their levities passed over him as a breeze passes over the Atlantic, leaving no mark behind. He found on reaching London that The Letter of Introduction had given his reputation a push forward: all who saw it remembered something which reminded them of it in their own early history, when the world was opening on them, and friends were cold and few; and it is said that it was the first of his pictures which laid effectual hold of the French heart: but this was

* From a Journal of this period I extract the following entry:—

"1814. July 11. To the Exhibition, which looked very odd after what I had seen in Paris: thought that a little more correctness in drawing would have done no harm."

This was Wilkie's opinion to the end of his too short but very brilliant career.

not till it had passed under the graver of Burnet, and appeared as a print. The following letter reveals a little of its history: —

TO SAMUEL DOBREE, ESQ.

Dear Sir, Kensington, 13th July, 1814.

I have just returned from France, where I was when your letter of the 28th May reached this. The Exhibition at Somerset House having closed on Saturday last, I am to have my pictures to-day, and, if it be perfectly agreeable to yourself and family, will have great pleasure in waiting upon you at Walthamstow, with The Letter of Introduction on Saturday next.

Yours, &c.,

D. W.

This very characteristic picture was long the ornament of the little collection of Mr. Dobree at Walthamstow: the great beauty of its composition and colour has had many admirers. It is still after some vicissitudes a heir-loom in the family.

After painting The Pedlar for his friend Dr. Baillie, to whose skill he attributed, and with reason, his restoration to health, Wilkie turned his thoughts on a scene which his own Exhibition in Pall Mall had presented, when the fine picture of The Village Holiday was unexpectedly distrained for rent due by an earlier tenant. His countryman Burns exclaimed, when he saw the roup of an unfortunate farmer's stock, "Rigid economy and decent industry, do you preserve

me from being the principal *dramatis persona* in such a scene of horror!" and the great artist, whose love of independence was equally strong, but more temperate than that of the poet, did not see without emotion the villanous clutch of the law laid on a work from which he hoped increase of fame as well as income. His anger did not overcome him so far as to hinder him from storing some of the incidents in his memory for future use: the cool calm lawyer's clerk, the churlish bailiff, and the mustering wrath of some of his north-country friends, are all to be found in this admirable picture.

He studied the whole with much care; tried the individual groups how they looked of themselves; drew each figure separate; again united them into one consistent whole; and brooded over the scene till he wrought it into harmony both of grouping and expression. When this was accomplished he expanded it on canvas; put in the nature from the life, submitted it in its progress to his friends, and carefully watched their looks to observe how they received it. The general impression seemed to be that, though as faithful as truth itself to the realities of life, it was sadder than what was usual with the artist; and some even went so far as to say that it would no longer be safe for any one to levy a distraint, so much would this picture warm the public heart against the law. Wilkie, who had no such fear of the terrors of the pencil, listened the rather to those who pointed out how the expression of one part might be heightened, and a truer harmony conferred on another; nor did he hear without a silent satisfaction that he

had been thinking of groupings in the pictures of Teniers and Ostade while The Distraining for Rent was growing beneath his hands. It was a favourite theory of his to keep some fine picture in his mind while his brush was wet, that in waiting he might warm his taste by its beauties, and, without exactly imitating, create something akin to it in spirit and feeling.

That he had any particular picture in his thoughts when he painted The Distraining for Rent, no one has ever said: it is an original work to all appearance, and one of those which sprang up from the artist's observation, rather than from books. The scene is very happily imagined: the house is not without warnings of what is coming; the idle jack, the burnt-out fire, the empty bee-hive, are so many intimations of mismanagement or slackness of industry. Though the visit of the bailiff with the lawyer's clerk has thrown the house and all it contains into violent commotion, such a visit, it is plain, could not be wholly unexpected. The human heart is prone to compassion; and that of the spectator melts at the sight of the fainting mother and her helpless children, already in want of food, and about to be deprived of bed and bedding. The father seems to upbraid himself for the misery which has fallen on all that he loved; and there are willing hands and ready tongues at his side to aid and assist him in retaining a hold of his own. In the midst of all this, the merciless lawyer, a smooth, smug, smart-dressed man, sits on the bed-side, making out an inventory of the poor tenant's goods and chattels, under protection of the bailiff, who

holds his cudgel like one who can use it, and eyes the frowning group like one who has more law on his side than tenderness in his heart. A fellow in a cap, who seems to be drowsy with drink, calls out the names, and lays his hand on the various articles, as the other writes; while, at the other end of the picture, a woman in a Scotch mutch holds her apron near her eyes, and regards the scene with a quiet glance of subdued melancholy.

'It was one of the settled maxims of Wilkie, that a price should not be fixed for a picture before it was finished; "for," said he, "it may, from being handled in a happy mood, or being fuller of character than at first contemplated, be worth double the fixed price; or it may chance to be less fertile of interest when completed than when it presented itself at first to the fancy, and not be worth more than half the proposed sum: either way the price is unfair, and the customer or the painter is wronged." The history of his works forced this maxim with double force on his mind: he fixed no price on The Distraining for Rent, but sent it to the Exhibition of the British Institution, where it attracted much attention, and was welcomed as one of his happiest compositions. The proprietor of The Letter of Introduction desired to have a second work from so popular a hand, and wrote to remind Wilkie that he had promised to let him know when he had one ready which had not found a purchaser.

TO SAMUEL DOBREE, ESQ.

Dear Sir, Kensington, 6th June, 1815.

It gives me great pleasure to be remembered by you, and to find you desirous of possessing another of my pictures. The only one I have been engaged upon since I have had the pleasure of seeing you is The Distraining for Rent, which, being neither a small nor a humorous subject, does not answer the description you have given me. At a future time, however, I hope to be able to hit upon a subject that will exactly suit you. Your being so well satisfied with the picture I have already done, will give me additional pleasure in undertaking it.

I am, &c.,

D. W.

But though several purchasers appeared, the Directors of the British Institution stepped in, and became the proprietors, at the price of six hundred guineas; giving in this way the attestation of their name to the surpassing excellence of the picture. The object of this association is two-fold: first, by the exhibition of choice works of the chief masters, foreign and native, to prove, by example, to what height art may rise when lofty objects are pursued; and secondly, to encourage merit by giving premiums for the best pictures produced by living painters. Portraits, however high their merit, are excluded from sharing either in their purse or their approbation:—this may be accepted as a proof that they either think them

unworthy of ranking with high art, or imagine that the portrait branch of the British Tree of Art is wet with dew, and moistened with rain, while the loftier boughs are left to perish and wither in the sun and wind. However that may be, there can be no doubt that some of the portraits of Reynolds, and Lawrence, and Jackson, and Phillips, and Wilkie—more particularly the William Blake of Phillips, and the Earl of Inverness, in the Highland garb, of Wilkie—take their place in the historic ranks of art; and there can be as little doubt that the Royal Academy looked with coldness and dislike on the British Institution when first established. Several of the members said that it was unfair to bring the masterpieces of other days in opposition to the yearly offspring of living talent; and unkind, since two exhibitions in the same season and time would to a certainty be injurious to an academy which had no government support, and instructed its students, fed its widows and orphans, and maintained the dignity of the fine arts out of the fruits of its annual exhibition.

Wilkie's next work was his beautiful picture of The Rabbit on the Wall, of which he says, in a letter to his sister, "In many parts I have succeeded better than common in the painting." Like most of his works, The Rabbit on the Wall was the offspring of his own observation; and has its origin in one of those rustic sleight-of-hand tricks which he loved to see performed, and sometimes to embody. The Rabbit on the Wall, or, as it is sometimes called in Scotland, The Hare amang the Kale, is a feat of hand familiar to every body; and, when per-

formed with dexterity, still excites the curiosity and wonder exhibited, by the artist, in the looks of the younger portion of the household. The picture represents a husbandman who seems just returned from his daily labour, seated amongst his children, whom he proceeds to amuse, as soon as his evening candle is lighted, with such harmless feats as children love. He puts the candle in the hand of a little girl; twists his hands into each other, putting two fingers up for the long tender ears, two fingers down for the constantly moving feet, and, imitating with finger and thumb the munching mouth of the little animal, throws, by means of the candle, a shadow resembling a living rabbit upon the wall. Nothing can exceed the infantine glee of the youngest child on perceiving this simulation: it pudders with its little feet, springs as if it would escape from the arms of its mother, who with a grave smile enjoys its raptures: while a second child, some twelvemonth older, regards the shadow with a face in which fear and wonder mingle, and hardly knows whether to regard his father as a wizard or no. Nor is the person who performs this rustic marvel unworthy of observation: he keeps an oblique look out on the wall to see that he holds the delusion cleverly up, and makes the shadowy animal move as if it really enjoyed a supper of dewy clover, and this he performs with an odd gravity truly diverting. Burnet has engraved, nor diminished in the least the glee of this picture. It was in the Exhibition of 1816, and had many admirers.

In the following letter Wilkie speaks of an order

he had received for a picture from the Marquis of Stafford, and of Canova's visit to London:—

TO JOHN ANDERSON, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

Kensington, 10th Dec. 1815.

For this month past I have been very unsettled in my studies, from the difficulty of making an arrangement with the Marquis of Stafford. I have at last, however, succeeded in satisfying him with a sketch, and I am now about to begin the picture, which will not be so large as I should have wished, coming from such a quarter, but large enough to occupy me for several months. The subject is a breakfast scene, and I am now hard at work in making a beginning. The scene is very simple; represents no story, but is admirably adapted for painting.

We have lately had Canova, the celebrated sculptor from Rome, among us. He was sent to Paris by the Pope to arrange the carrying back of the works of art that belong to the Italian states; and when his business there was over, he came to see the state of the arts in this country. I had the good fortune to be introduced to him, soon after his arrival, by Lord Holland, and had the honour of a call from him at my house, which has given me the means of forming an acquaintance with him that may be of importance to me at a future time. He had great attention shown him by the nobility during his stay; and, as we consider him an artist of uncommon powers, it was thought that the Royal Academy should show him some mark of distinction, which the members of

the Academy at last agreed to do in the good old English way, by inviting him to a dinner in the Academy. He saw the works of a great number of our painters and sculptors during his stay; and, among the rest, was once or twice at Haydon's, with whose picture he expressed himself very much pleased. As he could not come out to Kensington to take leave of me, he has written a very handsome letter. It is in Italian, and expresses so much kindness and attention that I shall keep it as a pleasing memorial of his friendship. He was presented to the Prince Regent the day before he went away. His appearance has made a stir among us.

D. W.

The state of his health still continued to excite the fears of Wilkie's friends, and he yielded to their persuasions to let his mind, as ploughmen say, lie fallow for a while till he made a tour among the galleries of the Netherlands. He had a twofold aim in this; he desired — while by fresh air, new scenes, and new faces, he amused his mind and amended his health — to improve his taste in composition and his skill in colouring, for which he felt that the Dutch were all but unequalled. While preparing for departure, the present of a medal, struck in honour of the twenty-five years reign of his friend West as President of the Royal Academy, called forth the following acknowledgment: —

TO BENJAMIN WEST, ESQ. P.R.A.

Sir, Kensington, 17th July, 1816.

I have received, and shall have great pleasure in preserving, the medal you have done me the honour to present me with in commemoration of the twenty-fifth year of your presidency of the Royal Academy; and, with my acknowledgments for this token of your friendship, I beg to express my sincere wish that you may be long preserved to fill the high station you have so long held among us, and to continue an ornament to the arts of our country.

I have the honour to be, dear Sir,

Your very obedient humble Servant,

D. WILKIE.

Some time in August, Wilkie, with Raimbach the engraver for a companion, set out on his meditated journey: he had read of the wonders of Dutch colouring in the tour of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and had witnessed its marvels in the pictures of Teniers and Ostade; indeed, it was difficult to obtain his attention to any thing else, if an Ostade or a Teniers happened to be near him: to penetrate the mystery of their colours would have been with him a discovery equal to the philosopher's stone. From the following letter we may obtain a glimpse of that which was uppermost in his mind when he passed through the far-famed galleries of Holland:—

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

My dear Brother, Amsterdam, 22d Sept. 1816.

As I was very desirous, on finding myself on the Continent, to extend my tour into Holland, Mr. Raimbach agreed to leave me at Antwerp, and return to Margate by the way of Ostend. I stopped one day at Antwerp after he was gone, and, as I happened to be accosted in the morning by a person I had known formerly, of the name of Dickie, a friend of Mrs. Paterson's, and who seemed very willing to assist me, I found myself pretty well off in gaining information about the place. I also called to see the pictures of Mr. Sueyers, and, having introduced myself to him, I found him very attentive. He took me to call on two of the first artists in the town, and was at the pains to get me a good deal of information for my route in Holland, and also two letters of introduction at Amsterdam. He also took me to the Museum, where I was highly delighted with a sight of the pictures that had come back from Paris, enjoying the additional advantage of seeing them on the ground. They seem to be the very masterpieces of Rubens, and, so far as I could judge, are in excellent condition. It is supposed that they must have been injured by the journey, but I saw no appearance of damage of that sort. One I saw in much more imminent danger from a picture-cleaner, who seemed to be carrying on his operations of renewal to the full extent of a *radical reform*.

The three pictures in the great church I was de-

lighted to see; and never did I feel more strongly the ruffianism of their removal from such a place. They looked magnificent.

After seeing a great deal of Antwerp, I set off, on Thursday last at noon, on my way to Amsterdam. We slept at Breda, and, on the second day, after passing by Gorcum and Utrecht, we arrived at this celebrated place. The character of the country is singular beyond every thing, and yet it is more like England than any other place I have seen abroad. It is a complete specimen of the triumph of industry over every possible disadvantage. The heavy rains have flooded the whole country. The land seems to float on the surface of the waters, and if it was not for a most perfect stillness and a dead level, they would inevitably wash away the whole country. The inundation, however, does not seem to be regarded as a serious calamity. The hay will not be so easily dried, and the cattle will be for a time deprived of their pasture; but the pumps and windmills will, in process of time, clear away the whole. We saw the people carrying in the hay in boats from one field to another; and those who were cutting it, were standing above their knees in water. But notwithstanding all this, the roads are as fine as any I have seen; and the cottages, to the very doors of which the water had risen, seemed as clean, and as dry, and as comfortable as they could have been in the finest season. What struck me the most in my journey in Holland was the perfect resemblance every thing bore to what I have seen in the Dutch pictures. Every bush, and house, and window, and, above all, the

people themselves, struck me as if I had seen them and known them before. The styles of their different painters were so various, and their variety of objects so few, that one may say every object has been painted, and, of course, therefore perfectly familiar to one acquainted with their pictures. I have felt this indeed to such a degree, that it almost seems like as if one had a previous existence.

Amsterdam is very unlike the towns in Flanders. It approaches, or rather goes beyond, London in another extreme, that is, in neatness and cleanliness. The people seem to be constantly scrubbing, and the houses have, in consequence, a degree of purity that I never saw before. The fault found is, that they do nothing else, and that, although their houses are so very clean, they are not at all clean in their own persons. Living, too, is very nearly as dear here as in London; every thing is high priced, and, except the bread, potatoes, and gin, which are excellent, I have not met with any article that is tolerable.

I have been to see several places, and to call on several people here; I find them very civil to me. I called on a printseller of great respectability, who has subscribed for half a dozen of The Rent Day. I have been employing my time mostly in making sketches of the people and of the buildings. My sketch-book is an introduction and an amusement to every body. The passengers were very much interested with what I was doing as we came from Antwerp, and, indeed, through the whole of the journey. I find myself something like the basket in

the tale; by making a sketch I can please everybody. This morning, as the Valet de Place was taking me through some of the narrow streets, I saw a young woman with a cap on her head that is peculiar to North Holland: as we found they sold gin in the house we went in, I called for some, and began her portrait. Her father and her mother, on perceiving what I was about, very soon became interested and pleased with it, and she herself would scarcely let me away unless I would promise to make one also for her.

To-morrow morning I go off for Haerlem, by the Canal, and before the evening expect to get as far as the Hague. At one of the towns I stopt at I found, from the book that was kept at the inn, that George Veitch from Edinburgh had passed two days before, on his way by the Hague to Amsterdam. This made me take the opposite course by Utrecht, in order that I might meet him. I have not, however, heard of him again.

D. W.

TO ABRAHAM RAIMBACH, ESQ.

My dear Sir, Kensington, 8th Oct. 1816.

I regretted much that you did not stop another day at Antwerp; you would have been greatly struck with the pictures just come from Paris, at the Museum. They appeared to me to be among the finest works of Rubens; and as they were not hung up, I

could see them to great advantage. These, with a considerable number of the Dutch pictures that had been returned to the Hague, and which I saw under the same circumstances, were the finest works of art I found in my whole journey.

The day after you left me I found some inhabitants of the place, who gave me a good deal of information about what I most wanted to know. I was told there was no printseller of any consequence at Antwerp, but that there was a respectable one at Amsterdam, and another at Brussels. By this time I had determined to extend my tour as far as the capital of Holland. I accordingly left Antwerp the second day after you were gone, about mid-day; got to Breda that night, and next morning made a most agreeable journey by Gorcum and Utrecht, and reached Amsterdam late in the evening. At Antwerp I had been provided with letters of introduction to this place, which I delivered in the first instance, and by one of them got admission to the Museum of Pictures, with which I was very much delighted. I met here with a young man whose father was an English artist resident at the Hague. He was of great use to me at Amsterdam; and, amongst other things, told me that Mynheer Buffa, an Italian printseller long established in that city, was the most respectable person in that line in the whole country. I accordingly called upon him, and found both himself and his son, to all appearance very respectable in point of stability and connexion in their trade, and very willing to do what they could for our concern. They showed me impressions both of The Politicians and The Blind Fiddler which they

had had from the Boydells, whom they talked of as very old acquaintances in the way of business. They told me they would rather *not* give *me* an order for The Politicians, as it would be better for them to have it with The Fiddler from Boydell; but they would subscribe for half a dozen prints and one proof of The Rent Day, on the terms which I offered, and at their request I left the etching and one of the proofs of The Politicians; the former to be shown by way of gaining subscribers, and the latter to be accounted for to us. The terms of payment I also arranged with them, and will explain when I see you.

From Amsterdam I went to Haerlem to breakfast, by the canal; heard the celebrated organ, which was really wonderful, and certainly finer than the one at Ghent. I dined at Leyden, which I reached also by the canal, and at night got to the Hague. I was induced to stop a day here on account of meeting with the English artist whose son I had met with at Amsterdam. The day after I went to Rotterdam, and the day after that, making altogether eight days, I returned to Antwerp. I expected to hear something of Haydon when I got to Brussels; but finding that he was not come, and that the weather was very unsettled, I gave up all intention of again visiting the field of Waterloo. I therefore resolved to make the best of my way to England, by the way of Calais. As it was Sunday when I was at Brussels, I could not well go to find out the printseller, whose name indeed I had forgot. I regretted this the less as the Messrs. Buffa did not seem to think that there was a printseller at Brussels of any extensive connexion.

I accordingly set off for Ghent, and when I got to the Lion d'Or, was surprised to find that the pair of boots that were left there had been sent to the Lion d'Or at Antwerp. I had inquired several times of the Bureau des Diligences about them at Antwerp, but never thought of inquiring at the inn where I was residing; and the people of the inn being very much unacquainted with English names, never thought of telling me they were there. As it was, however, I wrote immediately to a friend at Antwerp, to get them and send them by a package containing the helmet and some other things I had purchased to be sent by sea.

On travelling through France, the most singular occurrence was that of my being arrested at Calais, in the act of completing a sketch of the celebrated Gate of Hogarth. A young Englishman who had come from Lille with me had agreed to remain with me while I was making the drawing; and as I had first obtained leave from the officer on guard, I expected no sort of interruption. After I had been at work, however, about an hour and a half, with a great crowd about me, a gendarme came up to me, and with an imperious tone said, "Par quelle autorité faites-vous cela, monsieur?" I pointed to the officer on guard, and told him that he had given me leave. —"Ce n'est rien, c'est défendu, monsieur: il faut que vous fermiez votre livre et m'accompagniez à l'Hôtel de Ville." This I of course agreed to most willingly; and beckoning my friend to go too, I went along with him, with all the people staring at us. At the Hôtel de Ville we were requested to go to the mayor; and as

we were marching along to his house, the gendarme said, "Voila, monsieur le maire; arrêtons." We stopped till the mayor came up, and learning from us what was the matter, he dismissed the gendarme, took us back to his house, and told me that as there were a number of people there, as in other places, who, on seeing a foreigner making a drawing of a fortified place, would naturally suppose it to be from a hostile intention, and finding it done "en plein jour," would be apt to blame the magistrates for allowing it, adding it was necessary therefore that I should not go on with my drawing, although from examining it he was satisfied that I only did it for amusement, and therefore regretted the interruption.

I retained till a very late period the intention of being with you at Margate, and of sailing up to London by the steam-boat. I found myself, however, very sick crossing at Dover; and when I got to the custom-house, I was so harassed that I was glad to get to London any how. What do you think the fellows did? They seized upon the proof of The Politicians; and it was by mere accident that I discovered it was missing, or recovered it in time.

I do not know whether you are still at Margate, but I write you at hazard. When you come back, I shall be ready to touch on the proof of The Rent Day, which MacDonald has got strained upon a board for the purpose.

Yours very truly,
D. W.

To Sir George Beaumont he communicates the impressions which his mind had received from visit-

ing the land of Rubens, Teniers, Ostade, Cuyp, Jan Stein, and Wouvermans. He returned, he said, with a resolution strengthened rather than shaken by what he had seen, to depart in no respect whatever from what he regarded as his own peculiar line.

TO SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

Dear Sir George, Kensington, 12th Dec. 1816.

For some time back I have been only waiting for an occasion to write to you, and am happy now to have such a one as your very obliging letter presents. I thank you for your considerate inquiries about my health, which owes much, I assure you, to such intervals of relaxation as you recommend. With a view to this, indeed, and in order to make a tour that you advised me to long ago, I have lately made a journey through Flanders and Holland.

One of the first circumstances that struck me wherever I went was what you had prepared me for, the resemblance that every thing wore to the Dutch and Flemish pictures. On leaving Ostend, not only the people, the houses, and trees, but whole tracts of country, reminded one of the landscapes of Teniers; and, on getting further into the country, this was only relieved by the pictures of Rubens, Wouvermans, and some other masters, taking his place. I thought I could trace the particular districts in Holland where Ostade, Jan Stein, Cuyp, and Rembrandt had studied, and could fancy the very spot where pictures of other masters had been painted. Indeed, nothing seemed

new to me in the whole country; for I had been familiar with it all upon canvas: and, what one could not help wondering at was, that these old masters should have been able to draw the materials of so beautiful a variety of art from so contracted and monotonous a country.

One of the next objects that interested me was the view of the pictures that had been returned from Paris to Antwerp and the Hague. I saw the three great works of Rubens, the Assumption of the Virgin, The Ascent, and The Descent, restored to their places in the Great Church at Antwerp, and never felt more strongly the atrocity of their removal. The other pictures were still upon the ground in the Museum, and I saw them with every advantage for examination.

General Phipps and Mr. Jackson had made the same tour; but as they had landed first in Holland, they had more leisure to examine the private collections, which I entirely missed. I passed Mr. Jackson on the road between Ghent and Brussels, but could not stop him. The general I found at Brussels.

The field of Waterloo was to me, as to every Englishman, a subject of the deepest interest. Whatsoever one's pursuits might be, it was impossible to visit such a place but with the keenest associations. I did not expect that, to a common observer, the genius displayed in the choice of the ground would be so apparent; but it gave me a most striking idea of the powers of our great General. I wonder no one has thought of making a model of the field: the ruin of Hougomont would, by itself, make the finest subject for this that it is possible to conceive.

As I know you will feel interested in any circum-

stance of a pleasing nature that occurs to me, I cannot refrain from mentioning that the Duke of Wellington has commissioned me to paint him a picture; and that when he was last in England, he called upon me with some friends to give me the subject. He wants it to be a number of soldiers of various descriptions seated upon the benches of the door of a public house, with porter and tobacco, talking over their old stories.

At present we are alive in art. The studies made in the British Gallery are on view, and look more like a school of art than they did before. The entire south room is filled with large drawings of heads and groups of the Cartoons. Haydon has made a great number, of which it is not saying much that they are the best, though there are others of great merit. The copies of the oil pictures are not so good; and as for the Claudes, they have almost all mistaken them.

At the Academy we are proceeding in praiseworthy emulation of what was first done at the Gallery. We have got the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian, and within these few days the Cartoon of Ananias. A premium was given the other night for a very fair copy of a Vandyke.

Haydon has lately been able to work constantly at his picture, and has got on admirably. He has finished a row of heads on the left hand of Christ—all good,—and the head of St. Peter is, I think, the finest character he has done. Though nothing but heads are finished, it begins to look full of subject. It will add greatly to his reputation; and if it can excite the religious feeling of the people in its favour, its success may be incalculable. He went with me on Sunday

last to wait on the Misses Baillie at Hampstead, and was, as you may suppose, very much pleased with your good friend Miss Joanna.

When you come to town you will most likely find two of my pictures at the Gallery. The one is Dr. Baillie's; the other a scene of Sheep-washing, from a sketch I made in Wiltshire. The Breakfast Party I am now at work upon, and have got far advanced with it. With regard to the Sheep-washing, it is of course, being a landscape, entirely new to me. I certainly wish to get practice and to obtain some kind of proficiency in this way; but my ambition is not more than that of enabling myself to paint an out-door scene with facility, and in no respect whatever to depart from my own line.

D. W.

"Your interesting account of the Low Countries, says Sir George in reply, "and indeed the whole of your letter, gave me very great pleasure. The remarks upon the Field of Waterloo do credit to your feelings. I do, indeed, rejoice to hear of your success in your profession; and what could be more so than the commission of the Duke of Wellington and his visit. So much pleasure does it give me, that you are indebted to that occurrence for the trouble of receiving another letter so soon. I almost fancy I see in my mind's eye the excellent use you will make of the subject, and the animated countenances you will give to the soldiers who are recounting their gallant exploits to each other. I think I remember an excellent description in Goldsmith's Deserted Vil-

lage of an old soldier shouldering his crutch and describing his actions to his family and friends on his return from the wars. I mention this because I think any thing analogous to what we are about, well treated in poetry, animates and illuminates the mind; and although we may not adopt any thing literally from the poet, the imagination may be impregnated, and produce characters and impressions which might not otherwise have occurred. I think we are pretty well agreed upon the point, that the painter had better be the author of his own subject; for if the poet from whom he takes his ideas be a moderate one, he had certainly better trust to himself; and if he be excellent, the mind of the spectator is prejudiced. This I take to be the main cause of the pretty general failure of those who paint from Shakspeare, who impresses so striking a picture previously upon his reader, that it is a hundred to one the picture, however excellent, may fail of its effect: it is indeed almost impossible to contend successfully with a strong previous impression.

"Your account of Haydon's progress gives me sincere pleasure: every thing may be expected from him if he exerts himself uniformly; and such is his enthusiasm, I think there cannot be any doubt of that. You assuredly know that I have The Macbeth; for, although the size is a serious inconvenience to me, yet the picture remaining upon his hands gave me uneasiness; and upon his expressing his wish that I would take it instead of the one he was about to begin for me, I complied; for my first wish was to serve him. Indeed, excepting the size of the figure

of Macbeth, in which he has however shown great power, although I think he has failed, the picture is very fine, the colouring is excellent, and many parts perhaps equal to any thing he will ever do. I am very glad indeed to hear you will mix a little landscape painting with your other studies. I have no doubt of your succeeding in any thing you undertake. I believe I told you in my last how much I was gratified by my last year's visit to the mountains: how I should like to see you there!"

The picture of a landscape nature, to which the close of Sir George Beaumont's letter alludes, is called Sheep-washing, and is in the collection of Sir Thomas Baring. Critics have sought and found the subject in the Sheep-washing scene of Thomson; but the painter would scarcely seek in poetry for what he would find without the help of song. The scene includes a mill, such as Rembrandt or Constable loved, and which Wilkie it is likely remembered to have seen grinding corn on Eden-water. The mill again is a sort of outshot or *to-fall*—as we word it in the north—to a strange *rickle* of a dwelling house, which is at once old and new, two stories and yet only one. Into the mill-stream, which is turned aside from its proper purposes, two rustics are forcing a flock of sheep; while a couple of vigorous peasants stand up to the middle in the pool below, seizing, sousing, and plunging them about, till with purified fleeces they are allowed to swim to the bank, and regain as they best may the fold, where a black brother, whose fleece all the waters of the Eden could not whiten, seems to stand and

inquire what all this unusual pudder is about. A shepherd, with a staff in his hand, and a white-mouthed colley at his foot, stands on the watch that none of the flock escape from his care. This is said to be the sole landscape of Wilkie; yet, as in the back-grounds of Reynolds and Raeburn, there are snatches of landscape scattered about his pictures of a very peculiar beauty.

During the early part of the year 1817, Wilkie completed his picture of The Breakfast for the gallery of the Marquis of Stafford. In the following letter he grudges a little the long labour he had bestowed upon it, a labour, as we shall see, not lost upon its noble owner :—

TO JOHN ANDERSON, ESQ., CUPAR, FIFE.

Kensington, 3d April, 1817.

In our art the general distress seems not to have been much felt. A good number of pictures have been sold this season in the British Gallery, and artists continue to be pretty well employed. The picture I was painting for the Marquis of Stafford has been finished some time, and is to go next week to the Royal Academy. It has been seen by the Marquis and Marchioness of Stafford, and decidedly approved of. I think it will make an impression, but I almost grudge the long time it has taken me.

The print from my picture of The Rent Day has just been published, and seems very much liked. We hope for a great sale, as 450 impressions were sold within the first six days after publication. I expect that the great sale will be in the country, and particu-

larly in the agricultural districts. We have had a considerable demand from Norfolk, and I shall not be satisfied if there is not as great a demand for them in Fifeshire.

I have heard that a portrait of the Earl of Hopetoun has been voted for the County Hall at Cupar. This is quite right, and is the first thing of the kind they have ever thought of. This is a beginning, and I hope the example will be followed in many future cases. I observed that the little town of Alost in Flanders, not half the size of Cupar, has two or three fine pictures by Rubens in its church. Our country gentlemen should know *this*.

D. W.

For the Stafford Gallery to open its doors and admit a picture, was, as early as I remember, considered by an artist a crowning proof of reputation, and a security against forgetfulness: to get one of his works placed in that far-famed collection Wilkie was desirous; and when this was accomplished, the noble family of Gower treated him about the commission in a way too handsome not to call for the acknowledgments of the artist.

TO THE MARQUIS OF STAFFORD.

My Lord, Kensington, 9th July, 1817.

My picture of The Breakfast I have had this morning the pleasure of delivering at Cleveland House. The groom of the chambers has paid me, by your lordship's desire, 400*l.* for it, a sum which, as

it exceeds the price, 350 guineas, I engaged to paint the picture for, I have received as a liberal mark of your lordship's approbation of the work. A proper receipt for the above sum, and in discharge of the picture and frame, I have left at Cleveland House, and with my best acknowledgments for the handsome manner in which I have been treated by your lordship throughout this business,

I have the honour, &c.

D. W.

This same year (1817) Wilkie was busied in preparing studies for his Wellington Picture, and also for The Scotch Wedding, which had been commissioned by the Prince Regent. For the latter, as Nature was to him his monitress and model, he resolved to seek her where fashion had not intruded on her charms, and where he had kept company with her ere Fame had claimed him for her own. After sending a small picture into the Royal Academy Exhibition, more for the sake of keeping up his connexion with that body, than with the hope of extending or augmenting his fame, he set off for Scotland; and in a series of letters to his mother and sister, he describes the course he pursued, the scenes and sights he saw, and what new pictures he conceived or painted.

TO MISS WILKIE.

My dear Sister, Glasgow, 1st August, 1817.

In Edinburgh I was quite hurried about, and after all did not see one half of the people I wanted to

see. I went with Mr. Lister and family to Roslin and Dalkeith, and had a pleasant and a quiet day. At Dalkeith I saw all the family pictures, which, though not fine, always interest one from their variety of date and of style. I felt the same sort of interest in going over Holyrood House, when Mr. Allan accompanied me, where what struck us the most by far were the apartments of Queen Mary, which are now furnished the same as she left them. They gave me an idea of magnificence far beyond the time, or what I should have thought our poor country could have warranted. The tapestries are fine, and the silver and velvet damask hangings, though battered and tarnished by the two centuries they have gone through, have still the marks of a tasteful and costly brilliancy. These rooms had the appearance of being fitted up in the French style. In one of the two closets adjoining, which are dressed up as boudoirs, Queen Mary was sitting at supper with Rizzio when Darnley and the ruffians that were with him came in and murdered him. He was dragged out of her presence through a little staircase that is concealed by the tapestry, and we were shown the place under the door of the chapel where he was instantly buried. The actual scenes where such events took place you may suppose interested us much and detained us longer in the rooms than other people generally stay. The old woman who was with us was ill-mannered enough to complain, — we remonstrated, and the old beldame became pert — so that the whole ended in what Mr. John Clerk calls *a real skelpin flyte.*

I should have been glad if Mr. Allan could have

gone with me to the Highlands, but he certainly cannot. Mr. Clerk and some others advised me strongly to get the minister of Duddingston to go, who is an artist as well as a clergyman. On going to Duddingston, however, he was away from home, and his wife (who is a very fine woman) told me she doubted whether he could go, as his sacrament is just coming on; otherwise I believe that not only he would have gone, but that Mrs. Thomson, who is also a great enthusiast, would have accompanied us one or two of the stages. I accordingly left Edinburgh on Tuesday last without a companion, but with plenty of letters of introduction. I sailed from Newhaven in the steam-boat up the Forth to Borrowstoness, where I stopped to pay a visit to Dugald Stewart of Kinneill House. I was received with the greatest kindness by the Professor and his family. They sought out for me an old farm-house with a cradle chimney. The house was the finest specimen of the kind, every thing about it was plentiful and in good order. It is of the fashion of two hundred years back, and the family had been on the farm for double that time. The father, who is a very old man, remembered being at the plough during the battle of Falkirk.

Kinneill House itself is very ancient and very stately, and like other large old houses it has its imaginary inhabitants as well as its real ones. The ladies of the family very soon let me into their secret, assuring me at the same time that there was no truth in it whatever. There are a number of the rooms not now inhabited, and the country people have a tradition about a Lady Lilburn, who once lived in

them, and, from something strange in her history, is supposed to visit them still, and has been seen, it is said, sailing through the clouds at no very distant date. The story was even repeated to me by Mr. Stewart himself, when he took leave of me at night. He said there had been strange noises heard in the old apartments, but they were all to be accounted for by the old door that goes out upon the roof, which the wind bursts open on stormy nights, and makes a jarring and creaking over the whole house. After all this, and with the stately look of the staircases and apartments, with their awe-inspiring doors, I felt as if I had the imagination of a Mrs. Radcliffe. The family, however, induced me to stop two nights with them; so that we had frequent talks about the ghosts. One advantage, they said, they derived from the haunted character of their house was, that their garden never had been broken into, and that their winter-apples, and things of that kind, were at all times safe from depredation when kept in the apartment of the Lady Lilburn.

Mr. Stewart was so kind as to send me to see the palace and church of Linlithgow, about three miles off. Both conspire, with Holyrood House, to show the magnificence of the Scottish kings. I saw the Hall where the Scottish Parliament sat, and also the room in which Mary, Queen of Scots, was born; and in the church was shown the St. Catherine aisle, where James IV. was warned by St. John of his defeat at Flodden Field.

From Mr. Stewart's I went back to Bo'ness, and from thence to Alloa, and on to Stirling the same

night. This is a very beautiful place. It is very old, but rather decayed and dirty; but besides the interest one might feel in wandering through a place, with every step reminding you of antiquity and decayed splendour, I could not help often reflecting, with a sort of melancholy, on the associations it brought up.

Glasgow is really a magnificent place; some of the streets are very old and very fine, and sometimes very like those of Antwerp and Ghent. There are some of the streets here that would make a street in the city of London look like mere trumpery.

I have had a kind letter from Mr. Kirkman Finlay inviting me to the Isle of Bute, where he is for the summer. He says he can show me some of the primitive Highlanders.

D. W.

During his stay in Edinburgh, Wilkie revisited most of the favourite haunts of his youth, and loved to linger during moonlight in the High Street, looking at the shadows of the tall houses, thrown on the hills and glens with which the city is surrounded. He made good use of these remembrances when he painted The Visit of George the Fourth to Holyrood; nor did he fail to call in the like help when conceiving The Escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven Castle, for the scenery had been familar to him almost from the cradle. All who knew him, are aware how dear to his heart were the scenes of his early days, and the friends of his boyish years—dearer, perhaps, than the *sough* of fame—a fame confirmed

by the public voice, that accompanied him now wheresoever he went, and of the value of which he was not insensible.

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

Kames Castle, Isle of Bute,
11th Aug. 1817.

My dear Brother,

I saw a great deal of Dr. Chalmers while in Glasgow; and as I had to go to Hamilton, he was so kind as to propose to accompany me, and to go as far as Lanark. While we were preparing we had the offer of a companion,—a Quakeress. This accession enabled us to hire a post-chaise, and we were rather glad of her company, as it was adding a singular ingredient to the party. We started at an early hour, intending to breakfast with Professor Jardine, where the Dr. and I were expected. On our way we stopped at a place called Cambus Lang, remarkable in the year '42 as the scene of Whitfield's preaching, and for the conversion of a number of his hearers. The minister of the place showed us where the tent stood, and the space of ground that his hearers occupied, to the amount of thirty thousand. We had a good deal of talk about the remarkable conversion of many of the hearers; but I observed that the Quakeress, though she admired the scene, which was particularly fine, never said a word about the religious part of the discussion. The conversion is called the work of Cambus Lang, and it made a great noise in those days.

The minister of Cambus Lang went with us to breakfast with Professor Jardine. Our friend, the

Professor, and his family, would wonder not a little at our good companion the Quakeress; but she is a very respectable woman, and though possessing all the strict rules of her sect, she was very enthusiastic about all the natural beauties we went to see. We got on to Hamilton, where we saw the palace and the collection of pictures. These are much celebrated in Scotland, and certainly The Daniel in the Lion's Den, by Rubens, and a few portraits by Vandyke, did not disappoint me. From Hamilton we took our course up the Clyde through a most beautiful district. I began to look for the Castle of Tillietudlem, and for the hills that cover the scene of the battle of Drumclog. The Doctor had not read "Old Mortality," and took little interest in my enquiries; and although the Quakeress said, *Doctor, thou hast not time to read these kind of books*, I made him promise to read "The Tales of my Landlord" the first opportunity.

On getting to Lanark, we hurried to see the falls of Corra Lin, with which we were greatly pleased. We also passed by the cotton mills of that quacking regenerator, Mr. Owen; but we had not time to see any of his systems, and therefore took his improvements upon trust. On coming back next day, we stopt to see Bothwell Bridge; it gave us an exact idea of the real battle of the Covenanters, and also the fictitious one of the death of Burley in the Tale.

On returning to Glasgow, I saw Mr. Finlay, and engaged to accompany him to the Isle of Bute. Accordingly, after seeing what there was curious to be seen in the College, and in the manufactures of Glasgow, I accompanied him some days ago to this place.

Mr. Finlay rents an old castle in this island near to Rothsay, called Kames Castle; some of his friends are now on a visit to him, and some are on a fishing expedition. As my object is that of seeing the life and manners of the common people, I was taken by Mr. Finlay to some cottages close by, one of which I have fixed upon as the scene of my observations. It is a small farm-house close to the sea, held by a family of Macdougals — fishermen. The house is Mrs. Maclarty all over. On entering it, it is misery itself. The people and two good cows enter at the same door. The fire is on the middle of the floor, without any fire-place or legal mode of egress for the smoke, consequently the place is in a mist and in dust for ever; notwithstanding there is a hole at the top of each gable, and which the smoke has made a *lum* of, yet the greatest quantity by far makes its exit through the door. Amidst this appearance, however, of misery and of want of comfort, the family are far from being poor, and, take them altogether, young and old, they are as fine a specimen of our peasantry as I ever saw. The three sons are wonderfully fine men; they are herring-fishers, and have a boat that cost them 80*l.* The bit of land they have got they pay 30*l.* a-year for, and their possessions in cattle, woollen and linen cloths, &c., very respectable. There is one of the daughters we think very handsome. Her name is Nancy, and she is employed in all kinds of work, from white-seam and the making of butter and cheese, down to the gutting of fish and the mucking of byres. Her cleanliness, therefore, you may suppose, is only comparative, but she has

an elegant figure and a sweet smile. She both dances and sings, and wears her hair, you may tell Helen, constantly in papers. I went one day to make a study in oil of the house; this seemed to amuse them very much, and as they are naturally hospitable, I soon got acquainted with all of them. This morning I went back again to finish it. The young men and the father were preparing to go with the boat to the herring-fishery for a week, and there was a great deal of confusion in rigging them out. But to my great joy, who should they have with them for the day but the tailor and his apprentice, Hector, who with goose and law-board, was very busily employed in making jackets and trowsers for the young seamen. I found him a complete character, full of the village news, and full of curiosity about all I could tell him. He was measuring the young men before they set off: we soon got very gracious,—he worked with his needle and his shears, and I with my pencil. I was delighted to learn, from so authentic a source, all the clash and the claver of the country, all the old stories and antiquated customs; and he, on his part, seemed fully repaid by any thing I would tell him about the people in the Castle, or about where I came from, what business I was, and how my business or his own were paid in London. When their dinner-time came I was, with true Highland hospitality, asked to partake. I took some cakes and cheese with them. The tailor was here a very important man. The knowledge and learning he showed before the good simple people of the house was beyond every thing; and, what was more, he said grace, and returned

thanks, with a truly patriarchal reverence. Mr. Finlay, and one of his friends, called upon us in the course of the day, and the whole family in the Castle have been envying me the treat I must have had in the cottage of the fishermen.

In the course of a few days I shall proceed towards Inverary.

D. W.

Not the least amusing part of this letter is that which represents the distinguished Dr. Chalmers restraining himself from reading the inimitable tale of Old Mortality. There was for a time a hue and cry sounded in the north, that the Cameronian enthusiasts were caricatured and held up to ridicule in the persons of John Balfour, of Burley, Habakkuk Mucklewrath, and Gabriel Kettledrummle; and this perhaps made the Doctor reluctant to own intimacy with a work where the malignant Claverhouse, the latitudinarian Henry Morton, and the profane Bothwell moved and acted amongst those children of light.

TO MISS WILKIE.

Kames Castle, 15th Aug. 1817.

I have since my visit here met with one of those sort of beggars that must have sat as the original for old Edie Ochiltree. He is known by the name of Old Macgregor. He comes from Crieff, and comprehends within the circle of his perambulation the whole width of Scotland, from Craill, in Fifeshire, to the Mull of Cantyre. His dress is singular: he speaks

both Gaelic and English, and seems a most complete character. He makes people believe that he does them an honour when he takes a night's quarters with them, and I was told he is never satisfied unless they make tea for him. He gives, however, a very good character of himself, and his sort of conversation, while I was drawing his likeness, was exceedingly characteristic and amusing.

Yesterday Mr. Finlay took me across the water with him in his boat to a part of Argyleshire, called Coull. He went to fish for trout, and I to see the people. I was told that the weaver of the place lived at some little distance, in a cottage that, from its exterior, looked very promising. We therefore made up to it. We found the weaver, who had a cottage that struck me as the finest I had seen, and a daughter, as we thought, very beautiful. I made a sketch of the daughter, who with difficulty we got to sit, and with greater difficulty got to take off an English cap she had on, which we thought took from her simplicity, and which Mr. Finlay was quite sure she had put on after we entered the house. She complained that her hair was so *touzie;* but there was something exceedingly modest in her manner, and her figure and face were certainly handsome. We returned before night to Kames after a very tempestuous crossing in the boat, and a pretty good ducking, which, however, has done neither of us any harm.

I have had various letters sent after me to different gentlemen in the Highlands, and, amongst others, one for the Duke of Atholl, at Dunkeld. I wrote to Mr. Walter Scott from Edinburgh, and have had a most

kind answer, giving me various directions about what is to be seen, and inviting me to come for a few days to see him at Abbotsford, where he says he will tell me some old stories, and show me some interesting ruins in his neighbourhood.

I hope my mother continues as well as usual, and that you pay every attention to her, in taking her out to walk.

D. W.

Wherever Wilkie went, he looked around him with an artist's eye, and felt with a Scotsman's heart; for he loved the hills, the streams, the vales, and the people; he took sketches of picturesque places, wild cottages of turf and ling, and of wild inhabitants with warm hearts, and, as the maiden of the last letter observed, touzie locks. He found the genius of his distinguished friend Scott everywhere triumphant; he read his strains in every hill and mountain, and saw his heroes and heroines in the plaided and kilted shepherds and maids of the pastoral regions of the north; he found, as we have seen, an Edie Ochiltree in a Macgregor.

TO DAVID WILKIE, ESQ.

My dear Sir, Abbotsford, near Melrose, 2d Aug. 1817.

I learn with great pleasure from your letter just received, that you have revisited your native country... I cannot, now-a-days, pretend to point out any good Highland originals, to be rendered immortal

on your canvas, for the old Forty-Five men, of whom I knew many in the days of yore, are now gathered to their fathers. But I am sure you will be gratified by the scenery which time cannot make any impression upon. Pray do not omit to visit the head of Loch Awe, which I look upon as equal to any thing in the Highlands. There is some curious scenery near Aberfoil, in Perthshire, particularly a waterfall at Ledeard, at the top of Loch Hard, within an hour's walk of the inn, which, from its size and accompaniments, I should think particularly qualified to fill up a Highland landscape. I never saw any thing which I admired so much: the height is not remarkable, but the accompaniments are exquisitely beautiful. In a different style, and at no great distance, is an island called Inchmahome, which has some ruins of a monastery surrounded by huge chestnut trees, very striking, though looking of no importance from the shore. To mention minute information of this kind would exhaust your patience; but there is no corner of the romantic region, in which this letter will find you, which may not present something worth your looking at. I hope, on your return, that you will pay me a visit. I have my hand in the mortar-tub, but I have a chamber in the wall for you, besides a most hearty welcome. I have also one or two old jockies with one foot in the grave, and know of a herd's hut or two tottering to the fall, which you will find picturesque. Of scenery we can boast but little; the best we have to say of ours is, that it is simple, pleasing, and pastoral. I am labouring to produce landscapes to please some future generation, by plant-

ing as busily as I can, and I would be most happy to have your advice and opinion. If you delight in old stories and fields of battles, there are plenty to be had; and I must add, that we are within three miles of Melrose Abbey, and I will be happy to be showman over these beautiful remnants of architecture. A coach passes three times a week within a mile of my door; it is called the Blucher, and tickets are issued at the Black Bull, Leith Walk; its destination is Melrose and Jedburgh, but my guests stop at the turnpike gate at the end of Melrose bridge, where I will meet you, if you will let me know when I am to have the pleasure of expecting you. I am almost never from home.

Let me add my wishes for good weather and a pleasant expedition. I would offer you letters of introduction, but you bear them in your own high and deserved reputation, nor can I think of a mode of transmitting them.

Believe me, dear Sir,
Most truly yours,
WALTER SCOTT.

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

My dear Brother, Inverary, 21st August, 1817.

Saturday being one of the days on which the steam-boat passes Rothsay to go to Inverary, I left Mr. Finlay to resume my journey, after being highly gratified with the hospitable treatment I had received from him and from his family. The first part of our

sail was delightful. We passed through the Kyles of Bute to the mouth of Loch Ridden, where we were closed in by the most beautiful scenery, which extended inland to the romantic hills of Glendereule. We left this to keep our course round the island of Bute till we came to the mouth of Loch Fine, and gradually began to feel our approach to Inverary, by its setting in a very heavy night of rain. We could make nothing more of the fine scenery, and were only called out to see some resort of the herring-fishers, some hall of the Campbells, or the house of Lauchlan M'Lauchlan, of Strath-Lauchlan, near Castle Lauchlan. As it got towards dark we began to see the hills about Inverary, with the beautifully-wooded Dunaquoich that overhangs the castle. As we got up to the quay it was quite dark, and I think it gained much from the obscurity. The town seemed much larger; and what one could not see of the houses, was filled up in a finer way by the imagination than afterwards by reality. The first house that arrested attention had three large doors, grated over, with people inside; this we found to be the county prison of Argyle. When we got to the inn, I was struck with an appearance of grandeur that it had, so unusual in Scottish inns. It put me in mind of some of the inns of Ghent and Antwerp: the rooms were large and numerous; and what surprised me more than any thing, they were crowded with visiters. The day after, my illusions about the town were considerably dissipated; it dwindled into a little new-fashioned, modern upstart of a Scottish town. The houses have an appearance of regularity, as if they had been built by

contract. The great bustle at the inn was occasioned by our own entrance; for at any other time when the steam-boat passengers are gone, it assumes the appearance of a forsaken Bridewell.

I brought here a letter with me to Captain Archibald Campbell, who is Chamberlain to the Duke of Argyle; I went to his country house to deliver it, and received a true Highland welcome. He has a family of four daughters with him, who are very accomplished; and though they are Highland ladies, and as one would think in a retired situation, they are not behind the London people in any thing. There is very genteel society in Inverary. The castle itself is a complete importation, and disappointed me much; I expected a Highland residence, in place of which it is Bond Street or Brighton, both within and without, and has nothing in it at all belonging to the Highlands, the situation and country adjoining excepted.

I left Inverary to come down Loch Fine to visit Mr. Macneill, of Oakfield. On my way to the quay I heard a bagpipe sounding through the town, which I was told was the piper of the boat going round to waken the passengers. The day was just breaking, and the weather mild, and beautifully clear. The sound of the bagpipe had a most national and romantic effect. The piper was followed by an immense crowd of people—a motley crew of Highland shearers come from the Hebrides, to the amount of two hundred persons, on their way to the Low Country harvest. When they came to the boat, they had all to undergo the ceremony of paying their fare before entering.

Their passage from this to Glasgow (one hundred and ten miles) was two shillings, according to an agreement made with them; but I was told that some had chosen to walk rather than pay the sum. The crowd, when they got on board, was immense; and in order to render the boat safe, great care was taken to seat them so as to produce the best equilibrium. The Highlanders soon began to find out amusements for themselves; one of them got hold of the bagpipe and paraded the deck with it in great majesty, while a group of them in another place were occupied in singing a Gaelic cronach, which I thought a very interesting sort of music: it was wild and simple. In the steerage cabin another multitude was assembled, and one who had a fiddle with him, and who played very ill, gave them reels and strathspeys, to which several danced with great spirit and alacrity. These amusements continued till I left them at Loch Gilphead on Loch Fine.

On landing I found Mr. Macneill of Oakfield waiting for me, and I had a most kind reception from him. The house is full of company. He has taken great pains to show me the people and their houses in this neighbourhood. Among other things, he has got me a whisky-still to make a study from. It is a legalised one, in excellent order, very small, and the house where it is very picturesque. The men who keep the still cannot speak English, and the only interpreter I had was a breekless halflin, who attended me to carry colours. The young people are almost the only wearers of the kilt. The bonnet has gone entirely out of fashion, and it is only on a Sunday

they are ever seen in their full uniform, and then it is only the great beaux and smart fellows that wear them.

D. W.

From the study the artist made of the whisky-still which the hospitable laird of Oakfield procured for him, sprung that beautiful picture of the same name which some years afterwards appeared in the London Exhibition. Indeed, the sights he saw, and the strange faces which he met, had long an influence on his studies, and were visible in his pictures.

TO MISS WILKIE.

Trosachs, 31st Aug. 1817.

I started again with my gig, and passed along the banks of Loch Lomond to Luss. I could not see much of the scenery, as it was getting dark; but there is something delightful to me in this twilight travelling. The continued murmuring of the Lake, with its wooded islands, the dark purple mountains, and a straw cottage, with an occasional light beaming through its window, give a degree of beauty and cheerfulness to a scene of a common-place kind by the light of day. With respect to Loch Lomond; however, it can disappoint no one. Every thing about it is magnificent. The hills are large; Ben Lomond tremendous. He fills with his base an immense territory, and is opposed on the other side by Ben Voirlich and the Cobbler Mountain, all of them crowding

so much upon one another, that they seem to leave no space for the Lake to intersect them.

D. W.

Here the fine scenery came between the painter and the people, who are but thinly scattered among the picturesque regions where Scott has mustered his clans, and sent them forth—"All plaided and plum'd in their tartan array." The social aspect of man Wilkie loved more than the savage aspect of nature, and he made much of this tour rather in obedience to the counsels of Scott, than from a desire of his own to see heathery mountains and rocky glens. From these causes, perhaps, there are less of Scottish manners than we could have wished in one or more of his letters from the Highland line.

TO MISS WILKIE.

Blair Athol, 11th Sept. 1817.

At Stirling I arrived too late for the Perth coach, but at such a place it was no hard matter to find amusement. I went up to the Castle, and, after seeing every thing that is commonly shown to strangers, I began making some drawings of the Palace and Parliament House, which have been very fine buildings. In doing this I chanced to attract the attention of General Graham, the governor, who was kind enough to ask me into his house, to look at some of the apartments that were very ancient and curious. On going into the drawing-room I was presented to Mrs. Gra-

ham, an accomplished and clever woman; and, although I was an entire stranger to both, they were so kind as to ask me to dine with them. This I was obliged to decline; but on my telling them who I was, and that I was acquainted with some of Mrs. Graham's relations, the General insisted on my portmanteau being sent for, and on my stopping with them in the Castle for some days. This I was prevailed on to do; and it is right to say, that I have received more kindness and marks of friendship from them than almost from any one I have met in Scotland. General Graham devoted his whole time to me while I stayed, and took me to see every thing that was worth seeing about the place. We went over the field of Bannockburn, and to a place called Beattie's Mill, where one of the James's of Scotland was killed. I was taken as well to see a blind man who can repeat all the Bible by heart, and who has every chapter and verse completely at his fingers' ends. Read a verse, however short or unimportant, he can tell you at once where it is. Mr. Dugald Stewart was the first I heard mention this man, and my wonder has rather been increased than diminished by meeting with him.

I left General Graham after being three days at Stirling, and after being pressed very much to stop longer with him. From Perth I went on to Dunkeld, where I found that the Duke of Atholl, to whom I had a letter, was at Blair. To Blair, accordingly, I hastened on; and by a most romantic road I came to the pass of Killiecrankie, where Claverhouse lost his life in the moment of victory, and on to the Bridge of Tilt, where I got a bed for the night. Next morn-

ing I made the best of my way to the Duke's house, sent up my letter, and was admitted to the Duke and family at the breakfast-table. As the Duke was going out to hunt the deer, he gave directions that I should be shown about through the day, while the Duchess sent a servant for my luggage, and I was shown to a room assigned me in one of the stately wings of the house. In the course of the day I was surprised to find in the slaughter-house a man skinning a red deer of immense size, which the Duke had newly shot, and which had just been brought from the hills by an old maniac with a bonnet and kilt, who is employed to bring them down on horseback. Next day several horses and a cart were sent to bring others from the forest; and when the old Highland maniac arrived with them, the whole formed the most picturesque scene imaginable. There was one stag on each of the two horses, and three in a cart. They looked exceedingly beautiful; but I could perceive it was a load the horses did not like at all, and when they got them off they shook themselves heartily, and went and rolled on the grass. I began to make a sketch in oil of one of the dead deer, with some of the gamekeepers about it, who have all got kilts, and are very picturesque characters.

Amongst other objects here that indicate its being a Highland territory, is the piper. This is a famous personage. He has got the complete uniform of his order (a kilt and plaid), is a fine-looking fellow, and a most obliging good-natured man as can be. He plays regularly for half an hour before breakfast and dinner, and walks with stately majesty before the

house. I have made a sketch of him in a group which he seems highly pleased with.

D. W.

From these visitings to the palaces and castles of old Caledonia, nothing to which the painter lent the charm of his colours has appeared; nor has the Atholl deer, which he limned with his pencil as it lay bleeding among the brakes, found its way into any of his compositions.

TO THOMAS WILKIE.

Edinburgh, 13th Oct. 1817.

I left Cupar more than a week ago. I stopped to see my grandmother again at Pitlessie, from thence came to Kirkcaldy. I was a day with Mr. Fergus, and part of a day with Mrs. Ferguson, of Raith, both of whom treated me with great kindness.

Lord and Lady Leven have been very kind. In the house at Leslie there are a great number of pictures; one a very fine one of the Earl of Rothes, by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

To-morrow I set off for Melrose, to visit Mr. Walter Scott, with whom I expect to be much pleased. I may stop there some days, and most likely from thence will proceed to London.

D. W.

At Abbotsford Wilkie arrived in the middle of October. On the pastoral beauty of Tweedside, the romantic loveliness of the great poet's dwelling, which

had arisen like an exhalation from the ground,' at a wave of the magician's wand, and of the elegance and variety of his daily life, the painter loved to speak. But nothing astonished him more than the care with which all that Scott did was accomplished: he seemed the least busy person in the place, yet at that time romance followed romance with marvellous rapidity from his pen. There, too, he met the Ettrick Shepherd, and visited him in his abode on the Yarrow; and there he met, too, with Sir Adam Ferguson, whose social humour years have yet failed to abate.

TO MISS WILKIE.

Abbotsford, 30th Oct. 1817.

Since my arrival here I made a journey up the Yarrow with Mr. Scott's friend, Mr. Laidlaw, and saw the Rev. Dr. Russell, who desired most particularly to be remembered to my mother. He seemed very happy to see me, and delighted to talk over many old stories. On coming down from Yarrow I went to meet Mr. and Mrs. Scott, at the Duke of Buccleuch's, at Bowhill. Mr. Scott introduced me to the Duke and his family, and as it was a day on which there was to be a great cattle-show, there was a large assemblage of people at the place, and an immense number invited to dinner. The dinner was given quite in the ancient style of Border conviviality. Mr. Scott presided at a by-table in the principal room, at which the Ballantynes, Hogg the poet, and some others, besides myself, were present. This gave occasion to our being toasted as the Table of the Talents,

which made some merriment. The company sat till two o'clock. There was a great variety of songs, and before parting the gentlemen were so enthusiastic with music and with claret, that the song of *Weel may we a' be* was sung no less than five times, and *God save the King* about four times in full cry. I never saw such a flow of conviviality and high spirits, and at the same time the greatest good-humour.

I have been making a little group while here of Mr. Scott, Mrs. Scott, and all the family, with Captain Ferguson, and some other characters. They are so pleased with it that it has been taken to the Duke of Buccleuch's, when a request was made that I would paint a picture of the same kind of the Duke; but as this was going out of my line entirely, I felt it necessary to decline it. I have got a good way on with the picture: the Misses Scott are dressed as country girls, with pails as if they had come from milking: Mr. Scott as if telling a story: and in one corner I have put in a great dog of the Highland breed, a present to Mr. Scott from the Laird of Glengary. In the back-ground the top of the Cowdenknowes, the Tweed, and Melrose (as seen from a hill close by) are to be introduced. I am not to bring the picture to town, as Mr. Scott wishes to show it to his mother, but he is to send it to me. I have never been in any place where there is so much real good-humour and merriment. There is nothing but amusement from morning till night; and if Mr. Scott is really writing "Rob Roy," it must be while we are sleeping. He is either out planting trees, superintending the masons, or erecting fences, the whole of the day. He goes fre-

quently out hunting, and this morning there was a whole cavalcade of us out with Mr. and Miss Scott, hunting hares.

The family here are equally in the dark about whether Mr. Scott is the author of the Novels. They are quite perplexed about it: they hope he is the author, and would be greatly mortified if it were to turn out that he was not. He has frequently talked about the different characters himself to us, and the young ladies express themselves greatly provoked with the sort of unconcern he affects towards them. He has denied the Novels, however, to various people that I know; and though the family used to tease him at first about them, yet they dare not do it now.

D. W.

I have said that Wilkie visited the Ettrick Shepherd during his abode at Abbotsford. My friend William Laidlaw, a man of poetic talents inferior to few in the North, has kindly supplied me with an account of that visit, which will be read with interest by all — and they are many — who love to know what passes when distinguished men meet.

"One day," says Laidlaw, "Sir Walter Scott told me that Wilkie, whom I knew and loved, wished to go up the Yarrow to see Hogg, and that probably I would have no objection to be his guide, and procure him a night's lodging, for the Ettrick Shepherd at that time lived in a small cottage. Besides the satisfaction of accompanying Wilkie, I had many friends and relations in that district, whom I wished to see. We left Abbotsford one fine harvest morning, and

passed through Selkirk; the battle-field of Philiphaugh; passed Bowhill and Newark tower, and Hanging Shaw, with its fine woods of ash and oak and birch, contrasting strongly with the sombre pines of Bowhill. Wilkie's fine eye for the picturesque, and his feeling for the beautiful, were aroused and interested. All connected with the locality, of that nature, I pointed out to his notice, intermixed with tales of by-gone times. He loved to trace the steps of Scott, both in life and in story. He regarded with interest the fine green hills at Ashesteil, over which he rode to go coursing the hare, his favourite sport; and he listened complacently when I described some of the feats of a fine greyhound of mine, the father of Sir Walter's far-famed greyhounds, Douglas and Percy. When we came nigh the manse of Yarrow, Wilkie said that the minister was an old friend of his father's, and an acquaintance of his own. As the worthy minister was likewise a friend of mine, we called at the manse. The minister of Yarrow received him most cordially. 'Mr. David,' said he, 'I rejoice to see you, both for your father's sake and your own. You have made your name heard of — your fame has gone before you, and I am proud to have the honour of congratulating you on the talents with which God has endowed you, which have carried you to a high station in your art.' Wilkie had made up his mind to sleep at the manse; but the minister, imagining that he was invited to dine and stay all night with me at Whitehope, refrained from asking him; and this I saw hurt his feelings, for though of a modest and even bashful nature, he had pride with it,

and felt what he thought a slight. Our reception at Whitehope, however, soon made Wilkie forget the manse.

"Next morning we had a pleasant drive to Altrive, where we found my old friend Hogg at home, and exulting not a little from a flattering letter he had received from Blackwood, to whom he had sent his Chaldee manuscript. The cottage which Hogg at that time inhabited had been the *but* and *ben* of the former tenant, and he dwelt in the kitchen, for it was the preferable part: but the kitchen was large and roomy, and better lighted than such abodes used to be then, and was moreover wonderfully clean. The kettle was hanging over a cheerful peat-fire, and soon began to simmer; and James, then a bachelor, dispatched a shepherdess to borrow some loaf-bread, to which she added some kneaded cake. I felt pleased at the comfort the poet, as he was commonly called, had around him; and having several times accompanied Wilkie among the cottages of Gattonside and Darnick in search of the picturesque, I began to point out what I thought might amuse him while Hogg busied himself preparing breakfast. The poet on this began to look and listen: I had not introduced Wilkie as an artist; and it is probable he had taken him, as he did a great poet, for a horse-couper: he however turned suddenly to me, exclaiming 'Laidlaw! this is no' the great Mr. Wilkie?' 'It's just the great Mr. Wilkie, Hogg,' I replied. 'Mr. Wilkie,' exclaimed the Shepherd, seizing him by the hand, 'I cannot tell how proud I am to see you in my house, and how glad I am to see you are so young a man.' I was delighted

with the natural readiness and fine compliment of my friend, and pleased with the breakfast, which was now ready. We had, I remember, *rizzart* trouts—yellow fins, as Hogg used to call them—from the Yarrow, and a fry of parrs from Douglas burn, the most delicious of all fish, thousands of which Hogg and I in our youthful days had caught together in that mountain burn, almost the native stream of both. After breakfast we visited together the tower of Dryhope, had a beautiful view of St. Mary's Loch and 'those hills whence classic Yarrow flows,' and returned to Abbotsford. When I told Scott of Hogg's reception of Wilkie, 'The fellow!' said he, 'it was the finest compliment ever paid to man!'"

To the account of The Abbotsford Family picture, which Wilkie gives in his letter to his sister, let me add the description written by Sir Walter himself.

"This picture," says Scott, "has something in it of a domestic character. The idea which our inimitable Wilkie adopted was to represent our family group in the garb of south-country peasants, supposed to be concerting a merry-making, for which some of the preparations are seen. The place is the terrace near Kayside, commanding an extensive view towards the Eildon hills. 1. The sitting figure, in the dress of a miller, I believe represents Sir Walter Scott, author of a few score of volumes, and proprietor of Abbotsford, in the county of Roxburgh. 2. In front, and presenting, we may suppose, a country wag, somewhat addicted to poaching, stands Sir Adam Ferguson, knight, keeper of the Regalia of Scotland.

3. In the back-ground is a very handsome old man, upwards of eighty-four years old at the time, painted in his own character of a shepherd. He also belonged to the numerous clan of Scott. He used to claim credit for three things unusual among the Southland shepherds—first, that he had never been *fou* in the course of his life; secondly, he never had struck a man in anger; thirdly, that though entrusted by his master with the management of large sales of stock, he had never lost a penny for his master by a bad debt. He died soon afterwards at Abbotsford. 4, 5, 6. Of the three female figures, the elder is the late regretted mother of the family represented. 5. The young person most forward in the group is Miss Sophia Charlotte Scott, now Mrs. John Gibson Lockhart; and 6. her younger sister, Miss Ann Scott. Both are represented as ewe-milkers, with their *leglins*, or milk-pails. 7. On the left hand of the shepherd, the young man holding a fowling-piece is the eldest son of Sir Walter, now Captain in the King's Hussars. 8. The boy is the youngest of the family, Charles Scott, now of Brazen Nose College, Oxford. The two dogs were distinguished favourites of the family; the large one was a stag-hound of the old Highland breed, called Maida, and one of the handsomest dogs that could be found; it was a present from the Chief of Glengary to Sir Walter, and was highly valued, both on account of his beauty, his fidelity, and the great rarity of the breed. The other is a little Highland terrier, called *Ourisk* (goblin), of a particular kind, bred in Kintail. It was a present from the Honourable Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie, and

is a valuable specimen of a race which is now also scarce."

"There is a story about old Thomas Scott, the shepherd, which is characteristic. Tom was, both as a trusted servant, and as a rich fellow in his line, a person of considerable importance among his class in the neighbourhood, and used to stickle a good deal to keep his place in public opinion. Now, he suffered, in his own idea at least, from the consequence assumed by a country neighbour, who, though neither so well reputed for wealth or sagacity as Thomas Scott, had yet an advantage over him, from having seen the late King, and used to take precedence upon all occasions when they chanced to meet. Thomas suffered under this superiority. But after this sketch was finished and exhibited in London, the newspapers made it known that his present Majesty had condescended to take some notice of it. Delighted with this circumstance Thomas Scott set out on a most oppressively hot day, to walk five miles to Bowden, where his rival resided. He had no sooner entered the cottage than he called out, in his broad forest dialect—'Andro, man! did ye anes *sey* (see) the King?' 'In troth did I, Tam,' answered Andro; 'sit down, and I'll tell ye a' about it: ye sey, I was at Lonon, in a place they ca' the Park, that is no like a hained hog-fence, or like the four-nooked parks in this country ——!' 'Hout awa',' said Thomas, 'I have heard a' that before: I only came o'er the knowe to tell you, that if you have seen the King, the King has seen *mey* (me).' And so he returned with

a jocund heart, assuring his friends 'it had done him muckle gude to settle accounts wi' Andro.'" *

* Not long after my departure from Abbotsford, my friend Wilkie arrived there to paint a picture of the Scott family. He found the house full of guests. Scott's whole time was taken up in riding and driving about the country, or in social conversation at home. "All this time," said Wilkie to me, "I did not presume to ask Mr. Scott to sit for his portrait, for I saw he had not a moment to spare. I waited for the guests to go away; but as fast as one set went another arrived, and so it continued for several days; and with each set he was completely occupied. At length all went off, and we were quiet. I thought, however,—Mr. Scott will now shut himself up among his books and papers, for he has to make up for lost time: it won't do for me to ask him now to sit for his picture. Laidlaw, who managed his estate, came in; and Scott turned to him, as I supposed, to consult about business. 'Laidlaw,' said he, 'to-morrow morning we will go across the water, and take the dogs with us: there's a place where I think we shall be able to find a hare.'

"In short," added Wilkie, "I found that, instead of business, he was thinking only of amusement, as if he had nothing in the world to occupy him. So I no longer feared to intrude upon his time."—*Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey*, by Washington Irving, p. 113.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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